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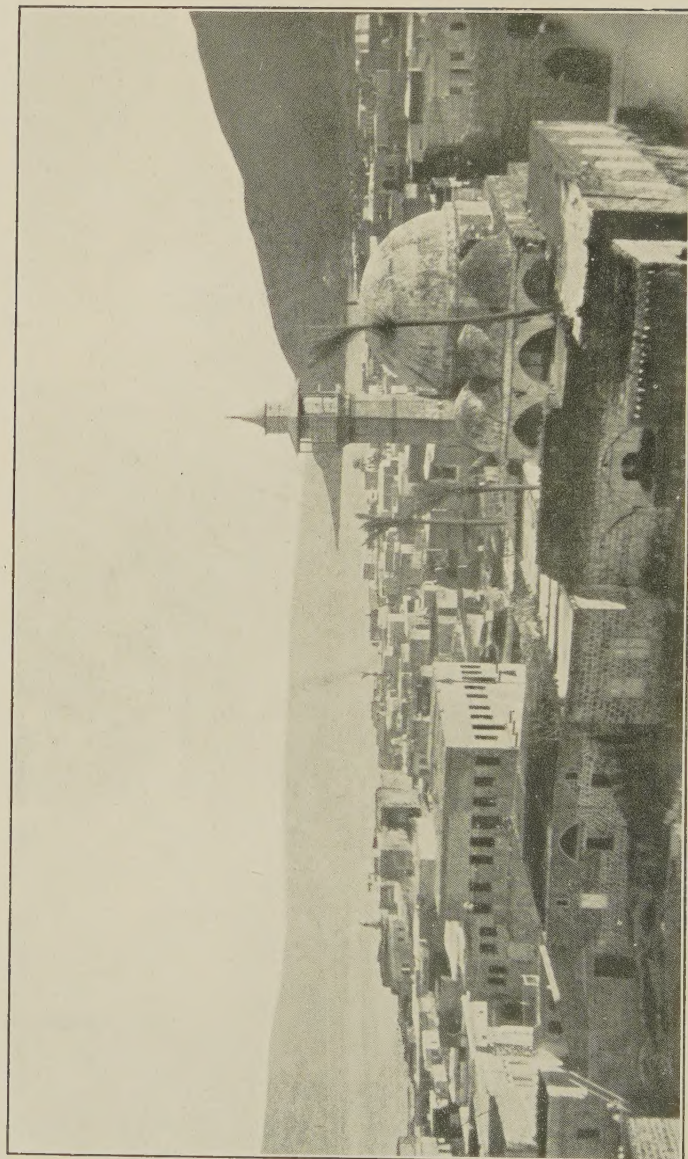
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NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES



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TIBERIAS AND THE SEA OF GALILEE.

REV. G. H. LANCASTER.

NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

BY

G. HAROLD LANCASTER, M.A., F.R.A.S., C.F.

Vicar of St. Stephen's, Bow, London, E.

AUTHOR OF

"PROPHECY, THE WAR, AND THE NEAR EAST,"

"JERUSALEM—OUR NATIONAL BIRTHRIGHT,"

"OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES,"

&c. &c.

HON. LECTURER OF "THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND."

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

PROPHECY, THE WAR AND THE NEAR EAST.

(Fifth Edition.)

The following are some brief extracts from Press Notices of the First Edition of this book:-

THE TIMES.—"Those who accept the 'historical view' of prophecy, which sees in Scripture an accurate forecast of the course history has taken, will recognise that Mr. Lancaster is a close student of Scripture, and has made good use of his travel in the Holy Land. He believes that Israel and Judah will be restored to the 'Promised Land,' a phrase, however, to which he gives a very wide interpretation."

MORNING POST.—"The Rev. G. H. Lancaster, Vicar of St. Stephen's, North Bow, E., is an authority on Palestine and its archæology."

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THE ONLY BOOK OF ITS KIND. ∴ UNIQUE
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OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES.

By the Rev. G. H. LANCASTER,

M.A., F.R.A.S.,

Vicar of St. Stephen's, Bow, E.3.

OF SCHOLARLY VALUE.—*LIVERPOOL POST.*

"The Rev. G. H. LANCASTER, author of *"Prophecy, the War, and the Near East,"* has here endeavoured to provide an outline study of what is called "British-Israel Truth," based on a general survey of Old Testament history, prophecy and fulfilment in the light of our glorious and Christian Empire."

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"A volume in which is sketched the purpose and contents of every book of the Old Testament."

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—*THE GLASGOW HERALD.*

To

MY FRIEND

SIR CHARTERS JAMES SYMONDS,

K.B.E., C.B., M.D., M.S., F.R.C.S.,

BUT FOR WHOSE REPEATED KINDNESS

AND SURGICAL SKILL

MY BOOKS WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN,

THIS VOLUME

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

TIBERIAS AND THE SEA OF GALILEE.

THE WELL AT CANA IN GALILEE.

THE GREAT MOSQUE EL-AZHAR

(THE UNIVERSITY OF CAIRO).

ANCIENT JERUSALEM.

ST. MARK'S, VENICE.

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CRAFTY MEN CONTEMN STUDIES, SIMPLE MEN ADMIRE THEM, AND WISE MEN USE THEM; FOR THEY TEACH NOT THEIR OWN USE; BUT THAT IS A WISDOM WITHOUT THEM AND ABOVE THEM, WON BY OBSERVATION. READ NOT TO CONTRADICT AND CONFUTE, NOR TO BELIEVE AND TAKE FOR GRANTED, NOR TO FIND TALK AND DISCOURSE, BUT TO WEIGH AND CONSIDER.—BACON (*Essays, of Studies*).

PREFACE.

THIS volume is offered as a sequel to my *Old Testament Studies*, a book which received the most generous welcome. It may at first appear an act of presumption on my part to attempt to publish these papers, when it be remembered that there is an ever-increasing number of commentaries and text-books, both devotional and exegetical, which are within easy reach of all students, who need assistance towards the reverent and faithful understanding of the Holy Scriptures—the Word of God.

But the line of thought developed in the previous volume suggested to me, and to my many kindly readers, the advisability of endeavouring to apply the same method of study to the books of the New Testament. It has been my aim, therefore, to meet that need, and therein to give to the student a series of *Studies*, which, it is hoped, being brief and to the point, will help to elucidate the New Testament in general, and its twenty-seven books in particular.

I am more than aware of the insufficiency and inadequateness of the results obtained. Indeed, it were impossible within the compass of these pages to give other than the briefest summary or analysis of each New Testament Book; but I pray that this very brevity may be helpful to the reader, and that the outline thus presented may prove more than fruitful to those whose joy it is to "search the Scriptures." Whenever it appeared necessary, I have drawn attention to the historical geography of the New Testament, a factor which makes it easier to appreciate the spiritual and material associations of the sacred writers, and which, in consequence, cannot fail to throw a flood of light upon the setting of the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. Also it may be mentioned that I have, with few exceptions, personally checked and verified the references to, and the quotations from, the classics, the early Fathers, and the many authorities generally from whose sources thoughts have been drawn and facts noted.

In this connection I may add that I have again adopted the course, previously followed, of placing the quotations and references *in situ* in the text, believing the same to be more helpful to the eye of the average reader, who is often tempted to overlook or neglect the references, when the latter are placed as foot-notes.

It is now my pleasant duty to thank those friends who have helped me. My grateful acknowledgments are due to the Earl of Dysart, through whose renewed kindness I am able to produce this book; to my publishers, Messrs. Marshall Brothers, Ltd., Paternoster Row, whose friendship and counsel, through many years, have encouraged me; to the Rev. G. H. Butler, M.A., and to Miss Lloyd, for their kindness in preparing the indexes at a time when severe illness laid me aside for months.

The Bible has a new message for every need, for every generation, and for every human being. It unfolds the Person of the eternal Christ, and presents Him, and the message of His Cross, as the only panacea for the sin of the world, and for the rebuilding of the temple of humanity. The Bible is the living voice of God, speaking to us to-day and upholding Christ, who, as the Holy One of Israel, has wrought redemption for His people, and has thus fulfilled, both in Himself and in His people, the demands of the ancient prophecies.

It is hoped, then, that this book, in its quest after truth, however feebly presented, may be a stimulating help to many souls, especially in these days of unrest and world disorder. And the prayer goes up to the Throne of Grace that this volume and the previous one, which together form a series of Biblical Studies from Genesis to Revelation, may cause the doctrine of the Kingdom of God to be exalted, the Lord of the Kingdom to be glorified, and the Gospel of the Kingdom to be propagated, "till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

G. H. L.

St. Stephen's Vicarage,
Bow, London, E.

New Testament Studies.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE New Testament is to the Old Testament what the Old Testament is to the New Testament. Neither one is complete without the other. They are not supplementary but complementary to each other. The Old Testament is prospective regarding the New, and the New Testament is retrospective regarding the Old. Together they form a perfect whole. Together they reveal the whole mind and counsel of God, and thus portray "Christ in all the Scriptures."

The Christian faith may be regarded as a circle, of which the Bible is the circumference, having Christ as the centre. The diameter drawn through the centre shows the Old Covenant and the New Covenant wedded in Christ, while the radii of the circle will represent the books of the Bible, each of which without fail points to Christ, as they all meet in the centre.

There are sixty-six books in the Bible, of which thirty-nine make up the Old Testament, and the remaining twenty-seven form the New Testament. The ratio, therefore, of the two Testaments is as thirteen to nine. Now thirteen is known to be the number which symbolises rebellion and incompleteness, while nine is representative of conclusion or completion, being the last of the digits. Just, therefore, as the Old Testament deals with national sin, rebellion, and human failure, so the New Testament tells of man's weakness finding its completion in the strength of Christ Jesus, who is "the Alpha and the

Omega, the beginning and the ending.” But it will be noticed that the numbers thirty-nine and twenty-seven are multiples of three. This number stands for that which is solid and complete. So the Old Testament deals with the complete rebellion and exile of Israel, while the New Testament reveals the “complete completion”—*i.e.*, the restoration and redemption—of Israel through the strength of Christ, Israel’s Redeemer. Thus the Testaments are reciprocal the one to the other, and together they form the complete fulfilment of the revealed purposes of God for the salvation of sinful man.

DIVINE UNITY OF THE BIBLE.

We see, therefore, that it is essential to study each and every part of the Bible with due and equal care. Not one book is more important than another; each contributes its inspired quota towards the building up of the whole, and it may even be said that each book in the Bible is a miniature Bible in itself. One has heard some ministers of the Gospel say that they find it quite impossible to preach out of the Old Testament, while on the other hand we know that the Jews neither believe in nor read the New Testament. They are each wrong, for the New Testament has little value apart from the Old, while the Old Testament is nothing but magnificent literature if it does not, constructively, point to the New.

THE REMOVAL OF THE CURSE.

The chief feature of the Old Testament is the inspired record of God’s dealings with men—and in particular with His chosen people—through the mediumcy of “the law and the prophets.” The chief feature of the New Testament is the inspired record of God’s dealings with men (and again particularly through His chosen

people) in the Person of Jesus Christ our Lord, through the Incarnation and Atonement, followed by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The Book of Genesis commences with the assumption of the existence of God—*In the beginning God*—whereas the Gospel according to St. Matthew commences with the fact of *the generation (or birth) of Jesus Christ*. The last word in the Old Testament is “curse.” The first sentence in the New Testament contains the revelation of Christ, who was crucified, with the crown of thorns placed on His head, *i.e.*, with the very thorns which were the symbol of the curse (Gen. iii. 17, 18), in order that He might remove the curse, and substitute the blessings of grace and love.

It will, therefore, be our purpose chapter by chapter to study the New Testament in briefest outline, and therein to continue the line of thought developed in my *Old Testament Studies* relating to the calling of Israel and to their redemption through the finished work of Christ. Not only will it involve a short *précis* of each of the twenty-seven books, but it will necessitate a reverent meditation upon the personality and work of our Saviour. We shall discuss the “colouring” of the Gospels, the special features of the Apostolic writings, and the progress of the Kingdom, whose Gospel is the glad tidings of Israel.

ISRAEL NO LONGER LOST.

Although Israel (the Northern House) had disappeared into exile over seven centuries before the birth of Christ, it will nevertheless be our purpose to show that the New Testament insists upon the existence and growing expansion of Israel, who, though lost to human vision, were ever known to God. We shall therefore allow the Bible to speak for itself, and to relate the actual and primary purpose revealed in the Incarnation,

bearing in mind, as always, the historical and prophetic difference between the peoples of Israel and Judah. It will be our aim to show that the redeeming work of Christ and the teaching of His apostles was to elucidate the mystery of Israel, and thereby to establish the recovery, the redemption, the renaissance, and the restoration of Israel. We shall in no way belittle the spiritual teaching of the Gospel for the saving of souls. To do that would be to deny our Lord, and to be a traitor to the word of the Cross. But we shall deal with the national message to Israel and of Israel, and so preserve the balance by not "spiritualising everything away," as is so often done by Bible Students and Christians generally.

It may mean for some Christians a new outlook; it may even go to the extent of their having to unlearn preconceived ideas. But truth is truth, and it is often stranger than fiction. So it is that in these last days God is allowing a new light to be thrown upon His Word, which is causing a new truth to be revealed, and the key to all is summed up in the term "British-Israel."

IN THY LIGHT SHALL WE SEE LIGHT.

CHAPTER II.

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE New Testament consists, as we have seen, of twenty-seven books, and these are composed as follows :—

- 4 Gospels.
- 1 Acts.
- 21 Epistles :—
 - 13 by St. Paul.
 - 1 to the Hebrews.
 - 1 by St. James.
 - 2 by St. Peter.
 - 3 by St. John.
 - 1 by St. Jude.
- 1 Apocalypse by St. John.

The above form what is called the Canon of the New Testament, but it must not be supposed that the Canon of either the Old or the New Testament was formed in a hurry.

THE GROWTH OF THE CANON.

In each case it was a growth whose development covered a number of years, and for a long while it was not known by the early Church whether the Canon of the New Testament was closed or not. The books at first appeared separately, in different localities and at various intervals of time. Individual Churches such as those founded by St. Paul treasured these books as Apostolic, and they were read together with “the law and the prophets” in the Christian assemblies of the day.

Gradually these books were grouped together according to their authorship or contents. It was soon manifest, for example, that the Gospels formed a group of four books by themselves, and that the thirteen epistles bearing the name of St. Paul formed another group. Similarly the *Acts* was seen to belong neither to the Gospels nor to the Pauline Epistles, so that with the *Acts* and the general (Catholic) Epistles another section was formed, to which was gradually attached the *Apocalypse*, or, as we technically call the latter, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*.

But for long years the Canon of the New Testament was not necessarily limited to twenty-seven books, for many of the ancient and best manuscripts contained other books, such as the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Epistles of St. Clement*, etc.

THE CLOSING OF THE CANON.

Now, the question has often been asked, how did the early Church get to know which books should or should not be contained in the Canon? Who was to say that St. Clement's Epistles were not to be Biblical, or that other beautiful books were not inspired? It is a remarkable thing that no general Church Council was ever held to solve this important point, neither did any pious bishop or layman in those early Christian days assume any authority for deciding the question. And yet it is not remarkable after all, for the Holy Spirit of God who inspired the human authors of the Bible was the same Holy Spirit of God who decided, with emphatic determination, exactly what the Canon of the New Testament should be. The Holy Spirit moulded the mind of the Church to accept those writings which were appointed, and to reject as uncanonical those which should not be included. The writings themselves appealed to the Christian conscience of the day, and the

Holy Spirit influenced the Church to discern between the genuine books and the spurious, and thus to retain such writings as were worthy of their place in the Canon, and to reject all others. It thus became easy to know where the New Testament began and where it ended. A line of strong demarcation was drawn by the Spirit, and a bulwark of defence was built as a fortification around the accepted books of the Canon, and no one to this day has ever succeeded in adding to, or taking from, the canonical books of the Bible.

Nor are we at a loss to understand the inspired decision to which the Church gradually came; for if the "Apocryphal" books be examined and contrasted with those of the New Testament it becomes self-evident that they are on another plane. There is a hiatus between the canonical books and the best of the uncanonical; the latter lack the latent dignity, the inspired uniformity, and the glorious spirituality of the books of the Bible; and noble and uplifting as many of these other books are, they fall short of the ideals of the Scriptures, as the light of a candle is eclipsed by that of the sun.

NEW TESTAMENT CATALOGUES.

Thus it will be seen that the Canon of the New Testament became automatically sealed, and that its closure became a recognised factor at the end of the fourth Christian century. Between 200 and 400 A.D. some sixteen catalogues of the New Testament books were published in Palestine, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Alexandria, North Africa, and Italy, some in Greek, and some in Latin. These catalogues displayed much variety and independence, but when studied together, and in the order of their dates, they show that the development of Church opinion towards the year 400 A.D. accepted the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as being Canonical, to the exclusion of all others. Were we to

go into detail we might show that some of the New Testament books struggled hard in the earlier days for inclusion in the Canon. Not every catalogue included the *Apocalypse*. Origen excepted *James* and *Jude*, The Muratorian Fragment denied *Hebrews*, *James*, 1 and 2 *Peter*, 2 and 3 *John*; but Epiphanius of Salamis, the Synod of Carthage, Jerome, and Augustine, among others, included all the books of the New Testament in their catalogues.

It will be seen, therefore, that the New Testament made its own gradual but successful claim to canonicity after a period of nearly 400 years, and it asked for itself the Divine right of being in the same status as that of the Old Testament, to which it is wholly complementary, and with which it is equally inspired.

The New Testament is the focussing lens through which pass the Old Testament rays of prophetic light, before they are thrown illuminated and expanded upon the world-wide screen of history. We shall, therefore, see, step by step, the wonderful way in which the New Testament clarifies and classifies the claims and truths of British-Israelism, just as it reveals the Incarnate life of Christ Jesus, Israel's Redeemer, and the effectual working of the Holy Spirit through Israel Redeemed.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL.

IT has been correctly said that it is impossible to write a life of Christ, because the life of Christ is not yet ended. It is, however, possible with love, devotion, and reverence to meditate upon the Incarnate life and ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel.

We will not concern ourselves in this chapter with the theological aspect of our Lord's earthly ministry, but we will rather content ourselves with gazing upon the historic Christ of prophecy fulfilled,

The glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,
Full of grace and truth.

We are ready to meet the agnostic, the atheist, and those who deny the Divinity of the Lord, because the fulfilment of the prophecies latent in the Messianic Hope of the Old Testament is found in the Christ of the Gospels, as well as in the Pauline and Johannine Christology of the New Testament, not excluding the universal consent of Christendom generally. Had there been no such Person in history as the living Christ, the ideals of the human race would, sooner or later, have constructed an hypothetical Christ, who would in all points have coincided physically, morally, and spiritually with the eternal Christ of history.

THE EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

If British-Israelism proves itself to be one of the greatest evidences of the truths of Christianity, as is often justly asserted, it is equally just to claim that

British-Israelism is the greatest proof in existence of the Incarnate life and ministry of our Lord. That is why British-Israelism has been the means of bringing many unbelievers to the foot of the Cross, and of convincing many agnostics of the verities of the Christian Faith. British-Israelism, then, confirms heart-belief, and at the same time strengthens intellectual faith, because in either case it pre-supposes and proves the Divinity of Christ, and bases its claim upon the "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction" which Christ made for the redemption of Israel, and "for the sins of the whole world."

The mission of our Lord to this earth, and the purpose of that mission, were both of them threefold:—

1. The fact of His mission:—

(i.) Jesus Christ was "given" by God as a perpetual donation (John iii. 16).

(ii.) He was "sent" by the Father as a "King's Messenger" (John xx. 21).

(iii.) He lay down His own life as a "freewill offering" (John x. 17, 18).

2. The purpose of His mission:—

(i.) To redeem Israel (Isa. xliii., Luke i. 68, Rom. xv. 8).

(ii.) To save the world (John iii. 17, 1 Tim. ii. 4).

(iii.) To glorify the Father (John xvii. 1, 4).

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION.

The mission of Christ was thereby accomplished through the perfect blending of two absolute natures, the natures of perfect God and perfect man. Christ had to be perfect God in order to work redemption, since no human being can redeem himself, least of all his brother (Psalm xlix. 7). He had also to be perfect man

in order that He might represent in every way the human beings whom He came to redeem. Thus He became the "One Mediator between God and men," representing God to man, and man to God, uniting perfect Godhead with perfect manhood in His Person. In no sense whatsoever can it be said that Jesus Christ has a dual personality, but in the blending of the two natures in the one Person lies the mystery of the Incarnation—*God manifest in the flesh*.

But in order to be representative man—the Son of man—it was necessary for Jesus to be "made of a woman." In order for Him to redeem Israel, it was necessary for Him to be born in Israel, of the seed of Abraham. Again, in order for Him to fulfil the ancient Hebrew prophecies, it was necessary for Him to be born of the tribe of Judah, since no enduring Kingship could come other than from the Dynastic line of David's seed. Christ was therefore King in two senses. He was "born King of the Jews," and as such He was crucified. But by eternal inheritance He was King of Israel, and as such He rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven; and that is why the disciples asked Him on the Ascension mount, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The disciples evidently could not have known the full purport of their question, although it will be noted that they did not say, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the *kingdom to Judah*?" Yet they were conscious of the prophetic significance underlying the royal title of Kingship which, for example, Isaiah gave to the Holy One of Israel—"King of Jacob," "King of Israel" (Isa. xli. 21; xliii. 15, xliv. 6). That Christ was King of Israel was recognised previously by the Galilaeans (Benjamites) when they sought to make Him King (John vi. 15); but had Jesus assumed His latent Kingship at that moment it would have defeated the purpose of His mission for the redemption of Israel. For, as the *kenosis* doctrine

implies, Christ "made Himself of no reputation [*i.e.*, He emptied Himself, as in R.V.], and took upon Him the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7), whereby He laid aside His inherited Kingship, and became a "bond-servant" (δούλος).

THE KING OF ISRAEL.

When our Lord made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, it was the Galilaean crowds who had followed Him thus far, and who saw in Him the fulfilment of the prophecy of Zion's (Israel's) King entering the City—"Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxi. 5; John xii. 13; *cf.* Isa. lxii. 11; Zech. ix. 9). That was the reason why Nathaniel had previously uttered "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel," for he was a guileless Israelite whose eyes were open to the truth. Similarly at the Crucifixion there were some among His persecutors surrounding the Cross who were content to see Him die as the "King of the Jews," but who quite expected that as "King of Israel" He would be able to save Himself (Matt. xxvii. 42; Mark xv. 32).

We therefore see that Christ had the power and the right to redeem Israel, because He was not only "the Holy One of Israel," but also the "King of Israel." It was necessary for Him to claim the title "King of the Jews" because of His Davidic descent (according to the flesh), and because He was King over all the covenant-seed of Abraham. But the Jews refused to accept Him as King, and so the Kingdom of God was taken from the Jews and given to the fruit-bearing nation of Israel (Matt. xxi. 43), who also had Christ as their King. This explains a verse which, owing to the ambiguity of the English translation, is only too often misquoted or misunderstood:—

He came unto His own,
And His own received Him not.

What St. John (i. 11) really wrote is :—

He came unto His own things (inheritance, Kinship,
Kingdom of Israel),
And His own people (the Jews, His own tribe of
Judah) received Him not.

“ His own ” in the first line is neuter in the Greek (τὰ ἴδια), whereas in the second line it is masculine (οἱ ἴδιοι).

Christ therefore came to visit and redeem His own prophetic inheritance of Israel, and in so doing he was rejected and crucified by His own tribesmen, the Jewish nation. *It was Judah, not Israel, that crucified the Lord of Glory*, for Israel had already accepted Him as King and Redeemer, through the Galilaean ministry, since the Galilaean were Benjamites, and therefore Israelites, by race, and only Jewish by religion.

KING OF KINGS.

So Christ is King of Israel to-day, and He is the Glory of His people, whose Empire and Dominions are illumined by “ the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ” (2 Cor. iv. 6). He is by Divine right the spiritual Head of the British and Anglo-Saxon peoples, and into the wardship of the latter He has entrusted the Gospel of the Kingdom for the ultimate salvation of the world. Let us then worship Him, and seek to crown Him Lord of all, for, as Israel’s King, He is

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GALILAEANS.

ONE of the most important questions which has to be studied in connection with the New Testament in the light of British-Israelism is that which concerns itself with the identity of the Galilaeans.

To say that the Galilaeans were the inhabitants of Galilee is both insufficient and inconclusive. They certainly were the people who inhabited the beautiful country of Galilee, but they were not autochthonous to its soil, neither were they the hybrid remnants of old-time civilisations, as, for example, are the Armenians of to-day.

That the population of Galilee was a mixed one cannot be denied, for there must have been Canaanitish and Assyrian elements still latent in their blood, while there was also a cultured strand of Greek and Roman society in their midst. But we are more especially concerned with the Galilaeian peasants rather than with the educated classes, for it was chiefly amongst the former that our Lord moved, and from whom He chose the disciples.

A cursory and unbiassed study of the Gospels, and of the Ministry of our Lord contained therein, reveals the fact that Galilee was a very blessed place, and that its inhabitants either had more vision than had the residents of other parts of Palestine, or received greater privileges. There are four outstanding features, however, which should attract the student's attention, and

these are so remarkable that there must be some Divine purpose which alone can account for them :—

- (i.) Christ's home was in Nazareth of Galilee, and not in Bethlehem of Judæa, His birth-place.
- (ii.) Eleven of the twelve disciples were chosen from Galilee, and not from Judæa.
- (iii.) The Galilaeans, generally speaking, "received Him," and thus accepted the Kingship of Christ (John iv. 45, vi. 15).
- (iv.) The Galilaeans had nothing to do with the Crucifixion of the Lord.

THE GALILAEANS WERE NOT JEWS.

The question then arises, "Of what nationality were the Galilaeans?" More than ninety-nine per cent. would reply that the Galilaeans were Jews. Neither does it seem unnatural to make such a reply, for they observed the Jewish religion; the towns and villages of Galilee in the days of our Lord had each its own synagogue; the Galilaeans went up to Jerusalem "to keep the feast" (John iv. 45); and, in short, it is well known that they practised the same religious rites and ceremonies, according to the law of Moses, as did the Jews of Jerusalem and Judæa in the south. The worship in Galilee was identically the same as that in Judæa, and after the fall of Jerusalem, Galilee became the centre of Rabbinic life, Maimonides being buried at Tiberias.

But if the Galilaeans were Jews, as were the inhabitants of Judæa and Jerusalem, how comes it that there was such a cleavage between the Galilaeans and the Jews? For there were such Judæan proverbs as "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John i. 46), and "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (vii. 52).

St. John makes it quite clear in the Fourth Gospel that there was a difference between the Galilaeans and the Jews, since he uses the word "Jews" 64 times (Matthew using it five times, Mark six, and Luke five), and in not one instance does it refer to the members of the Galilaean population, but always to the Jews of Judæa, with the solitary but important exception of the title of Christ, "King of the Jews," which is used in all the Gospels alike.

Again, the Galilaeans spoke a slightly different dialect, or it may be that there were provincialisms in the Galilaean speech which "grated on the sensitive ears of the Judæans," who regarded themselves as God's "élite." This served to associate St. Peter with our Lord (Matt. xxvi. 73) when he denied his discipleship.

THE GALILAEANS WERE ISRAELITES.

The truth is that *whereas the Galilaeans were Jewish by religion, they were not Jews by race.* This accounts for the fact that not one of the disciples is apparently identified with any tribe, neither are the disciples called "Jews" in any part of the Gospels. Only one of them belonged to the tribe of Judah, and that was Judas Iscariot, who belonged to the village of Kerieth, in the south of Judæa, and he was the only member of our Lord's chosen circle who was not a Galilaean. We see now why it was that St. John differentiated so clearly between the Galilaeans and the Jews, for he was not a Jew, but a Galilaean. If the Judæans had a disrespect—almost amounting to contempt—for the Galilaeans, the latter had every reason for holding their own against the former. The life and liberty of the Galilaeans formed a ready contrast with the stiffer bigotry of the Judæans, and that freedom of thought which enabled them to accept the Sermon on the Mount

and the "gospel of the kingdom" was encouraged by the beauty of the surrounding hills and the charming setting of the blue-watered lake of Galilee.

BENJAMITES.

If, therefore, the Galilaeans were not Jews by race, the next question that naturally arises must be, "To what race did they belong?" It is obvious that they were Hebrews of the stock of Israel, because it would have been contrary to all prophetic thought for Christ to have chosen His disciples from any source other than that of Israel. They were therefore Israelites, but not Judah-Israelites. But as the members of the kingdom of Israel were deported to Assyria and Media in the eighth century B.C., it is clear that the Galilaeans, though Israelites, were not actually members of the northern kingdom. There remains, therefore, for consideration the tribe of Benjamin, which, by elimination, affords the only possible solution. It is true that the Gospels do not actually claim the Benjamite tribeship of the Galilaeans, but by inference and deduction it will be seen that there is no other alternative, in view of the general trend of prophecy and of its fulfilment.

But if the Bible does not actually state this fact, there are, however, certain links in the chain of prophetic evidence which can have no other interpretation. The chief link lies in the fact that the tribe of Benjamin was lent to the tribe of Judah as a light-bearing tribe (1 Kings xi. 36, xii. 23), *but only for a certain length of time*. This period extended from the death of Solomon until the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, when the brotherhood (cemented by the loan of Benjamin) between Judah and Israel was broken at the price of thirty pieces of silver (Zech. xi. 10-14, Matt. xxvii. 3-10).

Now, when the Jews returned from Babylon in the sixth century B.C., we gather from the book of Ezra

that Benjamin returned with them to Palestine. Strictly speaking, the Benjamites were Israelites of the northern house, though, as we have seen, they were temporarily attached to Judah. But when the restoration took place, the Jews settled down in Judæa, which district was especially named after them, and the Benjamites being the only remnant of northern Israel that returned to the land in conjunction with the Jews, settled down in Galilee, for the intermediate country was already occupied by the Samaritans. In other words, they were guided of God to settle in a portion of that geographical area which had previously belonged to Israel, but never to Judah.

This accounts, then, for the fact of our Lord's life and ministry being so closely identified with Galilee, and with the important fact also that He chose eleven of His disciples from among the Benjamite-Galilaeans. The only disciple who rejected Christ was Judas, who was a pure Jew of Judæa, his rejection being a type of the Jewish nation, who rejected the Messiah.

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

Now we can understand the significance of Christ's preaching "the gospel of the kingdom" with such success in Galilee. For Isaiah (ix. i. 2) foretold that the Galilaeans who had walked in darkness should see a great light. And St. Matthew (iv. 12-25) expressly tells us that our Lord's Galilaean Ministry had for its purpose the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. But, as we have already seen, the influence of Benjamin was that of light-bearing. Hence the word "light" provides the link, and suggests that the light of Jesus Christ shone upon the Galilaeans, who received that light because they were Benjamites, in order that through the ministry of apostleship they might spread

that light into all parts of the world. This also explains why St. Paul was a Benjamite.

The Galilaeans, being Benjamites, therefore became the *via media* between Israel, Judah, and the world. The conversion of Galilee, the acceptance of Christ's Kingship by the people, and the calling of the eleven disciples, brought about through the Cross, as we shall see in the next chapter, the Redemption of Israel, which in its turn will ultimately lead to the evangelisation of the world.

CHAPTER V.

THE REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL.

WE now come to that point in our studies at which it is necessary for us to give a brief definition of that oft-repeated phrase "the Redemption of Israel." Neither is it possible to gain a tangible and coherent understanding of British-Israelism until we are in a position to appreciate the fuller significance of Israel's Redemption.

We are agreed that there is a distinction in Biblical and profane history, as there is in prophecy, between Israel and Judah. Now, if British-Israelism be regarded as the figure of an ellipse, it will have two foci, which represent the distinction between Israel and Judah at one point, and the redemption of Israel at the other. If, on the other hand, British-Israelism be regarded as a circle, it should have for its centre the Cross, which not only serves to explain the distinction between Israel and Judah, but which also forms the historical basis of the Redemption of Israel. It will be seen, therefore, that the latter, owing to the influence of the Cross, is of intrinsic importance. It is the one outstanding feature of all time and eternity, and without it the Old Testament prophecies could have no fulfilment, and the Atonement of our Blessed Lord would have no efficacy.

Now, in order to a better understanding of our subject, we must remove the old-time idea that the Ministry of our Lord had for its prime purpose the salvation or redemption of the Jews, for

(1) Salvation and redemption are not interchangeable words, as they each connote entirely different truths, and

(2) Our Lord did not come primarily for the sake of the Jews, but for the sake of Israel.

Had the mission of Jesus Christ been purely for the sake of His being claimed as the Jewish Messiah, it can only be said in all reverence that His mission was a failure, for the Jews rejected Him, and claimed "no king but Cæsar" (John xix. 15).

THE SECRET OF REDEMPTION.

But as we saw in the previous chapter Christ did not "visit" the Jews, but Israel, since it was His own inheritance to which He came, whereas it was the Jews (His own tribesmen) who crucified Him (John i. 11). This, then, is the secret of the Redemption. For seven centuries Israel had been lost, scattered, and unrecognised amongst the nations. But although they were lost to the knowledge of man, they were not lost in the foreknowledge of God. Our Lord Himself on two occasions stated that the House of Israel was lost (Matt. x. 6, xv. 24), and none can deny the truth of our Lord's words, especially as the accuracy of His statement is so strongly supported by both prophecy and history. Neither can it be said that the Jews were ever lost. The fact that our Lord speaks of the *House* of Israel being lost shows that He was speaking of Israel *nationally* and not *spiritually*. Similarly, it is clear that the Jews were not lost nationally. Their history was known in unbroken succession from earliest days; they formed their own polity in Judæa; they preserved their own racial and religious characteristics, and what is of greater importance still is that they had their own Temple. They were not a scattered nation, and they formed a concrete settlement within the bounds of the Roman Empire of that day. It is clear, then, that the Jews were not lost nationally, and that the words of our Lord did not refer to them.

WHAT REDEMPTION MEANS.

But, again, salvation and redemption are not, as we have seen, synonymous terms. The Jews needed no

redemption, though they certainly needed, and still need, salvation. Redemption literally means the buying back of something that has been cast off, or pawned, or the fulfilling of a pledge. The Jews were never cast off by God. They were always the visible and national remnant of the House of Judah, clinging to circumcision and the law of Moses. They could not, therefore, be redeemed. But Israel had been cast off. God told them that they were "Lo-ammi," *i.e.*, "Not My people" (Hos. i. 9). They were for 750 years ("a small moment," Isa. liv. 7) alienated as strangers from their Covenant. They became Gentilised; they gave up the law; they forsook the practice of circumcision; they knew nothing of Judaism.

The only thing, therefore, which could bring them back into Covenant-relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their fathers, was redemption. Having been cast off, they were eligible for redemption, and so the special purpose of the Mission of Christ was to visit and redeem His people, Israel, not Judah (Luke i. 67, ff.), "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8), and thus to restore Israel into the position of Covenant-fellowship with God. This could only come to pass by the payment of the highest purchase price possible, and that was by the pouring out of the blood of Christ, which alone could remit the sins of Israel (Heb. ix. 22), and through Israel's redemption, the sin of the whole world (John i. 29). The very fact that John the Baptist recognised Jesus to be "the Lamb of God" proves that Christ came to redeem Israel, for no other nation but Israel is known as "sheep" in the Bible, and the sacrifice of the lamb in the early days of Israel's Pass-over ceremony was originally an Israelitish custom, long before it became a purely Jewish one, after the deportation of northern Israel.

Stated simply, the Redemption of Israel signifies that when Jesus Christ wrought atonement through the blood of the Cross, He made it possible for Israel to be restored into favour with God, and thereby to enter into the fulfilment of the Covenant blessings, which latter could not become operative until the beginning of the Christian era (Gen. xlix. 1).

THE GALILAEAN LINK.

Now, as we have seen previously, the Galilaeans were Benjamites of Israel, though, for reasons already explained, they observed the Jewish religion. The only way, therefore, by which our Lord could acquaint the House of Israel of its redemption was by working amongst the Galilaeans, and by selecting eleven apostles from their midst. The work of the Galilaean disciples and apostles was to carry the message of redemption far and wide to the scattered and migrated remnants of the House of Israel (Matt. x. 6, 23). They had to bear the light of the Gospel to their brethren of Israel, and in so doing they preached and expanded the "gospel of the kingdom." This was the special mission also of St. Paul, the Benjamite (Acts ix. 15; Phil. iii. 5). A study of the evangelising commission given by our Lord to the apostles on the occasion of His Ascension (Acts i. 8) suggests that the Benjamite-Galilaean apostles were to be "witnesses" in Britain, for Britain was "the uttermost part [not parts] of the earth" of the Roman Empire of that day. Hence, our Lord had in His mind the planting of the gospel of Israel in this country, where Israel had so long been settling. This is supported by history, for the Gospel was early preached in Britain by St. Paul, as is proved by Stillingfleet, *Origines Britannicæ* (first edition, 1685 A.D.), and by Morgan, *St. Paul in Britain*, and by many other writers who produce abundant evidence

from early sources with which to substantiate their claim. The wonderful story of Glastonbury and of Joseph of Arimathæa bears its own witness also.

THE BRITISH CHURCH.

The British Church is older by a few years than the Church of Rome, for the Gospel was brought here direct from Jerusalem within a short period of our Lord's Ascension. British Christianity is the purest form of the Christian faith in the world, and from these Isles has emanated the preaching of the Gospel into all parts of the world. As the Israelites landed in Britain by successive waves of migration, so they welcomed the Gospel and sub-consciously accepted their redemption. This not only accounts for the great and high calling which the British and the Anglo-Saxons possess, but it enhances the greater spiritual responsibilities which God has laid upon us, and which it is our privilege to bear. We are God's "witnesses" because we are redeemed nationally, and by the fruits of our redemption through the Cross it is our bounden duty to further the Gospel for the ultimate salvation of all peoples in the world. Redemption is national, but salvation is spiritual.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Redemption of Israel forms the key which solves "the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark iv. 11). That is why our Lord told the disciples that it was given to them to understand the mystery, because their acceptance of Christ carried the secret of redemption with it. The Jews were likened "unto them that are without"; they rejected the kingdom, which was taken from them (Matt. xxi. 43), and which was given to the nation of redeemed Israel (Acts i. 6). The only part, therefore, which the Jews really had in the Redemption of Israel was that they crucified the Lord of Glory, through the shedding of Whose blood Israel became redeemed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOSPELS.

THE Gospels are four in number, and are named after their authors, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, respectively.

The word "Gospel" is Anglo-Saxon, and was originally written *godspell*, and sometimes *gotspel* (as in Old High German). It was originally pronounced with a long *o*, and meant "good spell," and not, as may be thought, "God's spell." Later on in English history the *o* was shortened, and the meaning of "God's spell," or "God's good tidings," became definitely attached to it. Similarly the word *gossip* was originally the Anglo-Saxon *godsibb*, which meant "God-kinsman," hence a sponsor.

The "gospel," then, means "good tidings," and is intended to be a translation which connotes the meaning of the Greek word *εὐαγγέλιον*, from which we get the English word "evangel," "evangelise." These good tidings are connected with the message of the Kingdom of God, and so St. Matthew speaks of the "gospel of the kingdom" three times (iv. 23, ix. 35, xxiv. 14), and St. Mark once (i. 14). The word "gospel" occurs altogether fifteen times in the Gospels, though strangely enough only in the first three, as St. John does not use it in the Fourth Gospel. It occurs 104 times in the New Testament, the only one occasion on which St. John does use it being in Revelation xiv. 6. It will be noted that there is no such thing as "the gospel of the Church" in the Bible, though it is frequently called "the gospel of the Kingdom," "the gospel of God," "the gospel of Christ"; once "The gospel of Jesus

Christ " (Mark i. 1), once " the gospel of His Son " (Rom. i. 9), and once " the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ " (2 Thess. i. 8).

So powerful is the word " gospel " in its appeal to veracity and assurance that it has become an adjective descriptive of unfailing certainty, as, for example, when we speak colloquially of taking it all " for gospel truth." Its intensity of truth is contained in the fact that " the gospel " conveys its message of glad tidings regarding both this life and the next. Sometimes preachers and teachers have been not a little inclined to minimise the human side of the gospel in developing the spiritual. But it will be seen that as our Lord preached " the gospel of the kingdom " (Matt. iv. 23-25), He invariably ministered to the needs of the body as well as to those of the soul. " There is a natural body," says St. Paul, " and there is a spiritual body," and the only panacea which can mete out its reforming and healing power to both body, soul and spirit, whether in this life or the next, is " the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," which alone can satisfy every need, whether bodily or spiritual.

THE SYMBOLISM OF NUMBERS.

To this end, then, we turn to the four Gospels, for they contain a fourfold picture of the earthly life and ministry of the Lord, and in so doing they unfold the practical and spiritual doctrine of the gospel as taught by Christ, and as focussed through the Cross and the Resurrection. Now there is always a definite purpose in the working of God's ways, and it is not without reason that the Gospels are four in number. The number four is symbolically the number of creation, as three is the number of revelation and Divine perfection, and as seven is the number of spiritual perfection. In the Bible it frequently happens that there is a symbolical

purpose in the selection of numbers. Neither is this purpose confined to such selection, for it will be found that the formation of numbers is based upon certain principles. In simple arithmetic a total may be arrived at by combining or adding together more than one series of digits or numbers; for example, six is composed of either five plus one, four plus two, or three plus three. Similarly twelve may be composed of several groupings of numbers. But in the Bible it becomes self-evident that numbers are totalled together according to certain specific groupings. Thus seven in the Bible is four plus three, as is seen, for example, in the Revelation, where the Seven Seals, the Seven Trumpets, the Seven Vials, etc., are composed of four plus three, rather than five plus two, or six plus one. This becomes evident when it is seen that the first four in each series of visions in the Revelation is terrestrial in character as compared with the others.

Also twelve in the Bible consists of eleven plus one, as we noticed in a previous chapter, when we observed that the twelve Disciples consisted of eleven Galilæans plus one Judæan.

THE NUMBER FOUR.

Four is the number of creation, and symbolises the human and material aspect of things. There are the four great elements, earth, air, fire, and water. There are four cardinal points of the compass, north, south, east and west. There are four seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn, and winter. 'Again and again in the Bible the number four alludes to the natural and created view of things. The creation took place in the process of seven periods of time. Here again we find the number seven consisting of four plus three, since the first four days of creation were employed in the formation of the material universe, while the

last three were used of God for the creation of animate life.

But the most striking fact is that four is never two plus two, but always three plus one, the grouping always being not one plus three, but three plus one, where the last of the series is distinctive in character from the three which precede it. Thus of the four Tabernacle materials three were metals (gold, silver and brass), while one was wood. Of the four Tabernacle coverings three were animal skins, and one was fine linen. So in the vision of the Image of Daniel the first three powers were definite metals, gold, silver, brass, and the fourth was a mixture of iron and clay, while in the vision of the four Beasts (Dan. vii.) the fourth beast was "diverse" from the first three, being "dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly."

THE DIVINE PORTRAIT.

We assume, then, that there must be a special significance attached to the fact of there being four Gospels, and furthermore that the four Gospels are grouped as three plus one. They represent the human conception of the eternal Christ. It would not have been possible for the portrait of our Lord to be painted efficiently in less than four Gospel pictures, neither would there have been any necessity for a fifth Gospel artist. Not one of the Gospels is sufficient of itself to give a finished portraiture of our Lord, but all four when studied together present a complete vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, beautiful in colour, perfect in tone, and absolute in perspective.

The grouping of the Gospels as three plus one allows for the ready distinction which can be made between the first three Gospels and the fourth; that is why the first three are known as the synoptic Gospels. They are framed more or less upon the same plan and

are distinctive from the fourth Gospel, which is different in construction, in purpose and in outlook. Behind the synoptic Gospels there is probably an oral tradition upon which they were largely built, although St. Mark's is the earliest of the three, while St. Matthew and St. Luke seem to have written their books on the basis of St. Mark's.

The first three Gospels deal with the Galilaean ministry more especially, while St. John records more of our Lord's ministry in Jerusalem and Judæa. It will be our next duty to examine the artistic setting of each Gospel, laying stress upon the individual colouring of each in turn.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOSPEL WRITERS.

THE success or interest of a given book very often depends upon the personality of its author.

No two people are alike, and no two authors have the same ideas even if they write with regard to the same historical event. It is so in all literature, the Bible not excepted. A close student of the Bible will readily discern that different human personalities underlie the Divine authorship of its sixty-six books. Although, for example, the books of the Kings and the Chronicles deal with very much the same narrative of events connected with the monarchy, it is quite clear that the books of the Kings have a colouring which differs from that of the books of the Chronicles. The same thing applies to the study of the Gospels. Not only are there at least four different authors describing more or less the same events, and the Ministry of the same Lord, but each Gospel has its own particular and peculiar colouring, and it is clear to the most casual and indifferent student that each Gospel possesses its own individual author, who is not to be confused with the writers of the other three Gospels.

Let us, then, in this chapter diagnose the artistic colouring of the Gospels, and in so doing let us very briefly peruse the primary purpose of each Gospel writer. We cannot enter into the involved subject of criticism, neither need we discuss the origin of the Gospels, nor whether they were first written in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, for there are many books and commentaries which deal with that question, and they can be studied elsewhere.

The four Gospels when placed together present a perfect and complete whole. By this we do not mean that each is incomplete by itself, but we would rather convey the thought that the picture of the historic Christ can only be studied in a complete portraiture by the placing together of the four Gospels. Each gives its own colouring; but when placed together they give a perfect blending, full and complete, so that taken as a whole the four Gospels portray a perfected picture of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

ST. MATTHEW.

Although St. Matthew wrote his Gospel after St. Mark had written his, probably basing it upon the latter, it is placed first in the New Testament, because the outstanding feature in the first Gospel is that of the Kingship of Christ. You may write across the First Gospel in bold lettering the words *Behold your King*, and you then have the embodiment of its principal thought in one eloquent sentence.

The First Gospel is essentially the book which teaches the doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingship of Christ, King of Israel, is the Kingship of Heaven, and St. Matthew never forgets this important point. As a tax-gatherer, he was especially subservient to the authority of Emperor and State, and the thought and regality of kingship appealed to him. St. Matthew records 15 parables, nine of which are peculiar to his own Gospel. Of these 15 parables, 11 are illustrative of the Kingdom of Heaven (*i.e.*, The Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven, Hidden Treasure, Pearl of Great Price, Draw Net, Unmerciful Servant, Labourers in the Vineyard, Marriage of the King's Son, The Ten Virgins and The Talents), and they may be more directly studied as the Parables of Israel. St. Matthew uses the term "Kingdom of Heaven" 33 times, while it

is not found once in the other Gospels. Against this it may be pointed out that St. Matthew uses the term " Kingdom of God " four times; St. Mark 14; St. Luke, 33; and St. John, twice. It is thus interesting to observe that St. Matthew uses " Kingdom of Heaven " 33 times, while St. Luke uses " Kingdom of God " 33 times !

St. Matthew records the genealogy of our Lord in accordance with His Royal Kingship. Jesus is thus born with a legal and inherited title to the Divine Kingdom, the Kingdom of Israel.

ST. MARK.

St. Mark was the amanuensis of St. Peter, and his Gospel is the oldest of the four. He regards our Lord as the Servant, and records the service of our Lord's ministry. The greater the rank, the greater the servant. The king is always the servant of the people, and Christ, who is identified with His people, is identified with them as the Servant of the Lord.

It is not necessary to know the genealogy of servants. They enter upon their duties, whether in the State or in the home, and fulfil their allotted tasks. So St. Mark does not record the genealogy of our Lord. He was appointed God's Servant to redeem Israel, and He faithfully fulfilled His appointed mission.

ST. LUKE.

St. Luke, probably a Benjamite, and not unreasonably to be identified with the companion of Cleopas on the journey to Emmaus, was a medical practitioner. In this capacity he records our Lord's life and ministry from a medical and human aspect. St. Luke, always a perfect artist, deals with the gospel of manhood and womanhood, and, therefore, with a few graphic pen-pictures reveals the perfect Manhood of Christ. St.

Matthew shows that Christ was born to Kingly inheritance, but St. Luke lays stress upon the fact that if Christ was a King, He was a King by Divine right because He was a perfect man.

St. Luke, therefore, records the genealogy of our Lord, because every member of the human race must have parents and ancestry. But as St. Matthew traces the royal line of Kings from Abraham forwards, so St. Luke traces the natural descent of our Lord backwards. His account is, therefore, complementary to that of St. Matthew, and thus the two genealogies give the royal and the human descent of our Lord.

St. Luke's is the gospel of humanity. He loves the crowds, the men, the women, and the children. He loves the sick and the dying. He loves to record the intimate and gentle touch which Christ displayed towards a fallen and stricken human race. He sees the perfect Manhood of Christ identified with a world of sorrowing souls. Only St. Luke could tell the story of Zacchæus. None but he could immortalise the Prodigal Son, or the Good Samaritan. He sought the society of those women who loved the Lord, and no other than St. Luke could find that delicacy of expression which could do justice to the story of the Nativity, and to the purity of His friendships and associations during the days of His flesh.

ST. JOHN.

St. John wrote His wonderful Gospel long after the Synoptists had laid down their pens. He wrote to prove the Divinity and Sonship of Christ (St. John xx. 31). He gives no genealogy because the historic Christ is begotten through all eternity. His Gospel has for its holy purpose the revelation of eternal life. He completes the Kingship, the Service, the Humanity of Christ by revealing His Divinity, and His oneness with the Father (x. 30). He depicts "the Godward aspect

of Christ," and portrays the eternity of spirit as opposed to the temporality of matter. His is, therefore, very essentially the gospel of love, because it is the gospel of life and the gospel of light.

THE FOUR SYMBOLS.

There are, in conclusion, four living creatures mentioned in the Bible which are symbolical of the four Gospel writers. In the prophecy of Ezekiel (i. 10) they are given in the following order: the Man, the Lion, the Ox, and the Eagle; but in the Revelation (iv. 7) they are placed in another order—the Lion, the Calf, the Man, the Eagle. Some of the early Fathers regarded the order of Ezekiel as being representative of the Gospels. This thought is still retained in Venice, where it is said that St. Mark's bones are preserved in the beautiful St. Mark's Church, and where the famous lion is regarded as symbolical of St. Mark himself.

But it is more appropriate to take St. John's vision as being symbolical of the four Gospels, as St. Matthew reveals Christ as King—the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; St. Mark pictures Christ as Servant—the Ox, the servant of man (especially in the East); St. Luke sees Christ as man—the third living creature in the vision; while St. John, teaching the Divinity and Sonship of Christ, sees Him as the Eagle coming from and soaring through the highest heavens, a gift from God to this earth, but too great for the World to contain Him.

CHAPTER VIII.

PALESTINE.

PALESTINE! That blessed place! What memories it conjures up to the reverent mind!

Was there ever a land so sacred in the annals of human history? Is there any part of the globe that has for four millenniums so attracted the gaze and the greed of peoples and Powers alike?

Palestine is the central arena in and around which has been enacted the drama of Biblical history. It is the world's greatest battlefield. It is the nursery of the Bible and the cradle of Christianity. The greatest of men have made their name and fame within its bounds. From Abraham to Allenby, from the Pharaohs to Napoleon, from a dissolute Alexander to the corrupted Kaiser, has Palestine held sacred its own rights and privileges. As a rugged coast-line beats off the inquisitive rush of an encroaching tide, so has Palestine said to its alien foes, "Thus far, and no farther." The instinctive rights of the spirit of Palestine have never ceased to hold at bay the advancing hordes of illegal tenants. Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian; Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman; Saracen, Turk, and German, have all in turn sought to indwell the Holy Land. They entered in triumph, stayed in discomfort, but each of them has retired in disorder with a shattered empire and blighted hopes. Where is the swaggering pride of Babylon to-day? What has become of the Porte, the mediæval empire of the disillusioned but unspeakable Turk? Yet Palestine remains, and under the reverent protection of the British flag it is rejoicing in a freedom and liberty which it has not known since the days of Solomon's splendour or David's majesty. There

are enemies within, and there are enemies without. Peace is not yet reigning in the land, neither is unrest removed from its borders; but conscious of its sacred calling and inheritance, its soul is marching on to victory and peace. Although dark clouds are hovering over, and the thunders of Armageddon are rumbling in the air, the eye that has the faith to see can already discern the luminous rays of the coming dawn, which, when the final fulfilment of the prophetic visions shall actually be accomplished, will radiate from the yet distant horizon to the zenithal blue of a world-wide prosperity and blessing.

ITS SCENERY.

Let us, then, take a scenery survey of the beauties of Palestine. For what can enchant the eye more than some of those priceless views in a land which has been for ever gladdened by the footsteps of our Saviour? Personally, I have from many a mountain top in Switzerland seen some of the most magnificent views in Europe. Numbers of times have I seen from one or another arrête or summit four countries at the same moment. More than once have I even had the rare opportunity of gazing into five countries at the same moment, *i.e.*, Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy. Who can describe the wonder of such a view, with the eternal ice and snows all round? And yet perchance the Palestinian views, though incomparably different, have made a more lasting impression on my mind in consequence of the sacred and time-honoured associations connected with them.

GALILEE.

Let us ascend a Jebel above Safed in Galilee, an ancient town, and one of the sacred spots of the Jews, likened by our Lord to "a city that is set on an hill."

From the top we gaze with silent appreciation upon the distant snows of Mount Hermon, in all probability the Mount of the Transfiguration. We are gladly reminded that the American and the Scottish Prayer Books, and the suggested Anglican revised Prayer Book, have a special Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the Transfiguration. Not so far away northwards one sees the beautiful Sea of Merom (Lake of Huleh), whence flows the infant Jordan on its mad career down to the lower depths of Galilee, and to the still lower plane of the Dead Sea, 1,296 ft. beneath the level of the Mediterranean Sea. The eye can just detect the mass of papyrus plant wafting in the breezes of Merom. Eastwards one sees the Hauran, with its volcanic wastes stretching towards Damascus, purple clad in the brilliant veil of an Eastern sunshine.

Southwards, and at a lower level, the blue waters of Galilee's Sea hold our attention in adoring meditation, as they remind us of the Master who, along its shores, and in the open boat, taught the "gospel of the kingdom" to the Benjamite crowds. Hither and thither we observe villages and ruins of villages, where in days of old there were synagogues whose walls resounded with the Voice of Jesus. And perchance that little pile of stones resting amongst the trees of Tel-Hum, by the water's edge, was the actual synagogue of Capernaum, about which we read in the Gospels.

MOUNT CARMEL.

But we must not linger long in Galilee, than which there is no more beautiful district in Palestine, for we are soon attracted by the darker ridge of Carmel. 'Always was Mount Carmel a dream to the Hebrews of old. Isaiah sings of its beauty, and rightly does he bracket "the glory of Lebanon" with "the excellency of Carmel and Sharon" (xxxv. 2). We, therefore, climb to the top, pausing awhile to rest at the spot where

Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal as we look down the well from which he drew the water that was licked up by "the fire of the Lord" in the trench around its Semitic altar (1 Kings xviii. 38). A victory for the Lord? Yea, and a victory for Israel, the forerunner of a greater victory yet to take place in the Plain of Esdraelon which stretches for many a mile south-eastwards from Carmel's base—the site of Armageddon. And what a view greets the eye from the summit! To the west are the ultramarine waters of the Mediterranean. To the north the coast-line of Tyre and Sidon. To the south lies the lovely Plain of Sharon, bedecked with its famous rose and anemone, and not far away the ruins of Athlit, the remnant of the Crusaders' conflict. To the distant east we pick out the hills of Gilead, with the depression of the Jordan just beyond the Mount of Gilboa, which latter tells its own story of the downfall of Saul, and, by contrast, the story of the resurrection of the widow of Nain's son. South-eastwards we see the historic hills of Ephraim and Samaria, over which peeps the crest of Judæa, while north-eastwards, and nearer to hand, we reverence the sight of Nazareth, whose house-tops appear on the ledge of a Galilæan hill, the latter carpeted with the choicest of Palestinian flora.

MOUNT OF OLIVES.

But the call of Jerusalem bids us hasten from Carmel and fly to Olivet, where, perhaps of all views in the Holy Land, that from the summit of the Ascension Mount is the most inspiring. The air seems charged with the glory of the Ascension of the Lord. With the disciples, we feel spellbound as we stand gazing up into heaven. And yet we lower our eyes, and what a vista lies around! Eastwards lies the Land of Moab, as a shelf with mighty cliffs projecting abruptly over

the Valley of the Jordan. Rising ever upwards is Mount Nebo, telling the story of Moses, the High-places of Chemosh, and the clairvoyance of Balaam. South-eastwards it is just possible to catch a glimmering view of the Dead Sea, right down in the impossible depths of the Ghôr, the deepest known depression in the surface of the earth. North of the Dead Sea lies the hollow where Jericho, once a beautiful city of palm trees, is situated, with the rock Oreb towering above it, and Gilgal in close proximity. All around eastwards and south-eastwards is the wilderness of Judæa, and no more fitting place to this day could be found for the setting of the parable of the Good Samaritan. As the eye moves slowly southward, it catches sight of Bethphage and Bethany nestling on the south-eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, and, therefore, almost at one's feet. Lazarus still lives, and there in thought is Mary, who "also sat at Jesus' feet."

Farther south is the Frank Mountain overlooking the cleft of Kidron, nor do we forget from Josephus that the Frank Mountain, or Herodium, as it is also named, contains the accredited tomb of that arch-tyrant Herod. This side of the Herodium the Judæan hills reveal the secret of Bethlehem tucked away $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Jerusalem, surrounded by the fields and pasture lands of David, where shepherds still watch their flocks by night. It has long been a Christian city, and so affords an insuperable evidence of the birth of our Saviour. Westwards in the far distance rise the mountains that shelter the Holy City from the Mediterranean winds, while northwards we cannot fail to see the distant hills of Ephraim and Samaria, and the site of Bethel, ever associated with Jacob, his dream and his stone, and for many long centuries an ancient High-place of the Semites. Every hill, every dale, every stick, and every stone, is associated with one or another incident of Biblical fame. The environment of the Holy City is

pregnant with thoughts and memories that link the human with the Divine, and so we must now let our eyes rest in expectant joy upon

JERUSALEM.

The city lies just across the Valley of Jehoshaphat on the western side of Olivet. And what a vision of glory and beauty is recalled by the sight of those ancient walls !

Beautiful for situation,
The joy of the whole earth
Is Mount Zion,
On the sides of the north,
The city of the great King.

The view embraces the Temple area (Haram-esh-Sherif), and a hundred domes, mosques, minarets, churches, synagogues, gates, and towers, all of them eloquent of a great history that is past, and prophetic of a greater history yet to be compiled. And as the setting sun casts his crimson rays upon the world's greatest metropolis, lo ! the city bursts into a scarlet hue, and reflects the glory of redemption wrought by the efficacy of the timeless Cross.

THE GREATEST VISION.

But the greatest vision cannot be seen with human eye, nor even from a consecrated mountain top. It can only be seen with the eye of faith. It is a vision which lifts the veil that hides the future. It sees the triumph of Israel and Judah, the victory of good over evil, and the conquering glory of a victorious Christ. It sees Israel fully restored, with the Jews accepting their Messiah under the Gospel-banner of the Cross. It sees Jerusalem "a praise in the earth." It hears the far-flung message of "Holiness unto the Lord,"

conveying the tidings of free salvation to the uttermost part of the earth. Finally, it is a vision which derives its satisfaction and reality in the grandest of all truths—that Christ did not die in vain, and that by His death and Resurrection He has won the world to Himself.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

THE First Gospel has always been associated with the name of the Apostle Matthew, who has by uniform tradition been accepted as its author, although the book itself is anonymous.

Eusebius in his famous *Church History* (H.E. iii. 39) quotes Papias (who lived about 140 A.D.) as saying, "Matthew, however, composed the *logia* in the Hebrew dialect, but each one interpreted them as he was able." Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons (at the end of the second century), says: "Matthew among the Hebrews published a Gospel in their own dialect, when Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and founding the Church" (*Contr. Haer.* iii. 1). These are the earliest references which we have to the name of St. Matthew being associated with a Gospel, although much doubt has been entertained whether the *logia* referred to by Papias are our first Gospel or not, and whether St. Matthew really wrote in Hebrew or in Greek. No early Gospel in Hebrew or Aramaic has ever been found, and it was not long before the Greek Gospel of Matthew captured the field which tradition has in unbroken succession attributed to the authorship of St. Matthew.

THE CONVERTED TAX-GATHERER.

We know little about St. Matthew, save that he was a "publican" or "tax-gatherer" (τελωνης), one who collected customs at the commercial centre at Capernaum, a place of considerable importance in those days. His name is spelt in two different ways in Greek, *i.e.*, Ματθαῖος and Μαρθαῖος, and is probably a shortened form

of the Hebrew equivalent to Thedorus—"Gift of God." His original name must have been Levi (Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27), it being probable that he took the name of Matthew on becoming a disciple of Christ. It is noteworthy that he does not himself use the name Levi, for after his conversion he calls himself *Matthew the Publican*, in contrast to his previous name of *Levi the Publican*, which he afterwards disowned.

St. Matthew was a Galilaean, and, as we have seen, in utmost probability a Benjamite. He records the Galilaean Ministry of our Lord, laying great stress upon the doctrine of the "gospel of the kingdom," which latter is "the kingdom of Heaven," and prophetically "the kingdom of Israel" (Acts i. 6), a kingdom which is heavenly concerning those things which are spiritual, and earthly regarding its traditional and inherited development.

ST. MATTHEW'S PURPOSE.

He, therefore, teaches the Kingship of Christ, and the doctrines of the Kingdom, by recording (a) the Miracles, (b) the Parables, (c) the Discourses, (d) the Events, in such a way as to give a clear (but not necessarily chronological) account of the ministerial life of Christ, in confutation of those who denied our Lord's Divinity, who failed to see Him as the Jewish Messiah, and whose blindness prevented them from seeing that He had come to regenerate and redeem Israel, the birth-right tribes of the seed of Abraham. To this end St. Matthew focusses attention by means of the Miracles, Parables, Discourses, and Events, with such vividness as to throw into bold relief the Kingship of Christ. He sees Christ as Law-Giver, Prophet, and King; and yet not as the ordinary law-giver, but as a Royal Law-Giver, and not as an ordinary prophet, but as a Royal Prophet, not as an ordinary king, but as King of kings, and Lord of lords. The Sermon on the Mount illustrates

Christ as the Royal Law-Giver. None but a King could speak such words, for it required a greater than Moses to teach that the grace of the gospel of the kingdom transcends the law of Sinai.

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.

Christ's charge to the Apostles (x. 16-42) illustrates that He was a Royal Prophet, greater than any who had preceded Him, for none but a Royal Prophet of Kingly Majesty could have in a few short words foretold the building up of Israel's Church on a world-wide basis, greater than the Papacy and more glorious in its liberty than the historic bondage of the Church of Rome. None but a Kingly Prophet could utter such parables as those (xiii., xxv.) which for nearly two thousand years have connoted the unfolding of Israel's Kingdom in the blessedness of the gospel of the Cross. Once more, only a Kingly Prophet wiser than Solomon, greater than Daniel, could have foretold (xxiv.) the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the Second Coming of Himself as King.

The Miracles, the Parables, the Discourses, and the Events illustrate Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. The Miracles illustrate Christ's Kingly power over nature, the spirit world, disease, and death. None but one whose Kingly Majesty reigns supreme over both this life and the next could have lived as Jesus lived and died, and could have died as Jesus died and lived again.

HIS OWN CLAIM.

Then we must notice His own witness to the Kingship of which He was the Eternal Inheritor. He came to claim the Kingdom. At His birth He was welcomed as King; on the Cross He was hailed as King. His command to the twelve was to preach the Advent of the

Kingdom. He taught His followers to be citizens of the Kingdom. If He despised an earthly crown (Matt. iv. 5-10), He accepted the Hosannas of those who rejoiced at His Royal entry into the Holy City. So it was in the Discourses and Events. They are the records of the King of Israel. The former confirm the teaching of the Parables, while the latter represent in life and action that same kingly teaching. The Events are as a golden ring in which are set the jewelled Discourses which reflect the light and the lustre of the Kingdom, its gospel and its doctrines. Once only in Discourse did Christ definitely claim and assume the title of King, and that was when He said: "Then shall the KING say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Finally, it will be seen that Jesus Christ opposed all Jewish and temporal ideas of a political crown. He would hold no golden sceptre in His hand. He had not come to overthrow the Cæsar, nor at that juncture to sit on David's Throne. He, therefore, died for His kingship, the kingship of Israel, and through the portals of death entered the Gate of the Heavenly Kingdom, and rose again as the firstfruits of the Kingdom. His Resurrection was a kingly Triumph, and it was a kingly power and authority that He gave to His eleven disciples, as He exhorted them ere He ascended, and entrusted them with the kingly Commission:—

All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations,

Baptizing them in the Name of

The Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

This is the teaching of St. Matthew's Gospel in briefest outline. It pictures the King from Birth to Resurrection, and from the Ascension until He comes

again. Always is He Israel's King. He is Israel's King to-day, not yet wholly crowned, although Israel is fully redeemed. He is coming again as Zion's King, and when He is wholly accepted by a restored Israel and a converted Judah, He will then advance His kingship over all nations, and will be worshipped by all people as

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

CHAPTER X.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

THE Second Gospel has always been associated with St. Mark, and though placed second in the New Testament, it is generally known to be older than St. Matthew's Gospel. The Book itself is anonymous, but there is little doubt but that St. Mark, who was the amanuensis of St. Peter, was the author.

The earliest record which we have of the Marcan authorship of the Gospel is that of Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, in the early part of the second century. He wrote a book called *An Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*, which, however, is irretrievably lost, although fragments of it are preserved by Eusebius in his famous *Church History* (H.E. iii. 39). Papias was undoubtedly a very careful writer, for he always endeavoured to verify every statement or fact before he wrote it. He felt it his duty to enquire of "The Elders," viz., men of authority in the early Church who had themselves been in close touch with the Apostles or their disciples. From them he concluded that St. Matthew wrote what we now believe to be our First Gospel, and that St. Mark wrote his Gospel either at the dictation of St. Peter or as a result of his friendship with him. In fact, we cannot do better than quote the actual words of Papias, who said, "The elder said this also. Mark having become the interpreter of Peter wrote down accurately all that he remembered—not, however, in order—the words and deeds of Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord nor was he a follower of His, but later on, as I said, he attached himself to Peter, who would adapt his instructions to the needs of the occasion, but not teach as though he were composing

a connected account of the Lord's 'Oracles'; so that Mark made no mistake in thus writing down some things as he remembered them. For one object was in his thoughts—to omit nothing that he had heard, and to make no false statements."

THE INTERPRETER OF ST. PETER.

Other early fathers, such as Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, associated Mark with Peter, while Dr. Swete, in his *St. Mark* (p. xviii.), says that the connection between St. Mark and St. Peter is "one of the oldest and most trustworthy of Christian traditions." Much may depend upon what Papias meant when he said that Mark was the "interpreter" of Peter. The Greek and Latin words for interpreter (*ἐρμηνευτής*, *interpretres*) probably mean "translator." Now, St. Peter was "an unlearned and ignorant man" (Acts iv. 13), and it is very doubtful to what extent he (and St. John in his earlier days) could speak Greek. The language which our Lord and His disciples used was Aramaic, and so the probability is that St. Mark was the interpreter of St. Peter, translating what he said or wrote from Aramaic into Greek.

All four of the Gospel writers are known as Evangelists, but only two of them—St. Matthew and St. John—were Apostles. St. Mark was a friend and companion of St. Peter, and St. Luke was a friend and companion of St. Paul. Jerome called St. Mark and St. Luke "Apostolic men"—i.e., men who because of their acquaintance with the Apostles were duly qualified to expound and to report their teaching.

THE IDENTITY OF ST. MARK.

Not much is known about St. Mark, but in the Acts (xii. 12) we are told that St. Peter after his marvellous deliverance from prison "came to the house of Mary

the mother of John, whose surname was Mark." From this we gather that Mark was a Hebrew and the son of a leading Christian woman in Jerusalem, at whose house the faithful assembled for prayer. It is probable that St. Peter lodged at their house when he stayed in the Holy City. It is often thought that this was the same house, of which St. Mark was the "goodman" (Mark xiv. 14, Luke xxii. 11), in which our Lord kept the Passover before the Crucifixion. Another not unreasonable suggestion, owing to the anonymity of the person referred to, is that St. Mark was the young man who fled that same night, leaving his linen cloth behind him (Mark xiv. 51); in both of which cases St. Mark must have seen Christ, and perchance have been one of His followers. Against this latter fact, however, it must be mentioned that the Muratorian fragment (about 170-200 A.D.) seems to suggest that St. Mark had never seen our Lord. We have, therefore, no sufficient data upon which to build up any theories regarding St. Mark's association with our Lord, neither do we know exactly in what particular way he was associated with St. Peter.

The name Mark was a Roman *prænomen*, as was frequently used among Greek-speaking people, but not commonly amongst the Jews. It is probable, therefore, that St. Mark, though residing in Jerusalem, was a Galilaean Benjamite, which may account for his friendship with St. Peter and St. Paul. It is uncertain whether he is the same person as the Mark who was a cousin of St. Barnabas (Col. iv. 10), but if we assume the identity to be the same, then Mark was probably a Levite, and not a Benjamite (Acts. iv. 36). He must have helped largely in the ministry of the Apostles, perhaps arranging for their missionary journeys, and baptising for them, as St. Paul did not do much baptising himself (1 Cor. i. 14). His friendship with St. Paul does not seem to have lasted long, for it ended

in the separation of Paul from Barnabas—who (the latter) took Mark to Cyprus—unless from the reference in the Epistle to the Colossians we may assume that Paul and Mark became reconciled to each other (see also Col. iv. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24), the latter proving a comforting “fellow-worker” and a “profitable” helper to the former in his ministry.

Nor must we forget that St. Peter claims a Mark as his son (1 Peter v. 13). But this expression is perhaps used to show that Mark was a disciple of Peter, and his son “in the faith.” It does not necessarily assume that there was another Mark the actual son of St. Peter.

ST. MARK AND TRADITION.

Tradition associates Mark with St. Peter rather than with St. Paul, and if St. Paul came to Britain, as is more than likely (see Morgan's *St. Paul in Britain*), it is not unreasonable to suppose that St. Mark, whether or not he became reconciled to St. Paul, spent as much time as possible with St. Peter during the closing years of the latter's life. Tradition further associates him with both Rome and Alexandria, while the Egyptian Church assigns its principal liturgy to his name. The apocryphal *Acts of Mark* makes him a martyr. Venice to this day rings with his name, while the Venetians will still tell you that the remains of St. Mark are resting beneath the High Altar of San Marco, it being said that the Evangelist's bones were brought from Alexandria in the year 829.

GOSPEL OF SERVICE.

His Gospel is the gospel of service. Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords; but He is also Lord of men and servant of all. That is his message. He fulfils the prophetic vision of the Servant of the Lord

His is the gospel of action, for the servant must always be occupied and at work. His favourite word is "straightway," for the "kingdom of God" brooks no delay; service is always prompt and immediate in its demands. Thus "straightway" (or "immediate" and "anon," for the Greek word *εὐθέως* is the same) occurs 41 times in the Gospel. He pictures the rapid, ceaseless energy of Christ, the servant always hard at work for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the world. Mark does not quote much from the Old Testament, neither does he refer to the Mosaic Law, since the words "law" and "lawgiver" do not occur once in his Gospel. He only relates eighteen miracles and four parables, his being the shortest, but the most graphic, of the four Gospels.

St. Mark's Gospel is written in chronological order. Although he omits many portions of our Lord's public ministry, he does not misplace any event. So it has been pointed out that if his omissions are supplied in their proper place from the other Gospels, a continuous life of Christ can be deduced from St. Mark's Gospel. It has been called "a swift narrative of Divine doing." He omits the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the great Discourses (except that on the Second Coming), and yet his Gospel is full of vividness and picturesque detail.

FOR ROMAN ISRAELITES.

Lastly, he wrote for Gentile and non-Jewish readers. He nowhere sees Jesus as the Messiah; he explains certain Jewish usages, words, and places, which, being understood by the Jews, would not be understood by the Gentiles. It is, therefore, probable that he wrote for the Gentiles of the Roman world, and, incidentally, for the Gentile-Israelites who were scattered in the vast

area of the Roman Empire, especially as he uses several Latin words not found in the other Gospels. These Israelites would welcome his Gospel, for it showed them that Jesus Christ, the Servant of the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, was "the Son of God" (i. 1).

St. Mark, therefore, proved the Service of Christ by His Divinity, as St. John proved the Divinity of Christ by His Service.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

THE Third Gospel has always been associated with the name of St. Luke, who has by uniform tradition been accepted as its author, although the book itself, as in the case of the other Gospels, is anonymous.

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, speaks of "Luke the companion of Paul" as having "written in a book the Gospel which the latter preached." The Muratorian fragment mentions "*St. Luke's Gospel as the third*," while Eusebius, in his *Church History* (H.E. iii. 4), tells us that Luke was by race a native of Antioch, and by profession a physician, and that he wrote two inspired books—the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN.

St. Luke is mentioned by name at least three times in the New Testament (Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24), and it is presumed that he was with St. Paul at Rome when these epistles were written, being alone with the aged 'Apostle at the date of the latest (2 Timothy). We are expressly told that he was "the [not "a"] beloved physician" (ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητός), as is evidenced by the many traces of his professional knowledge and language in both the Gospel and the Acts.

Some think that he may be identified with Lucius of Cyrene, in which case he must have been a kinsman of St. Paul (Acts xiii. 1; Rom. xvi. 21), but there are philological grounds for doubting the possibility of this identity. He was not circumcised, and, therefore, was

not a Jew by race, as he is distinguished from those "who are of the circumcision" (Col. iv. 11, 14). His close association, and possible kinship, with St. Paul suggest the possibility of his being an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin. Probably St. Luke was a convert of St. Paul, in which case he may have met, or have been in close touch with, the latter at Tarsus, where he could have studied medicine. In support of this Tertullian (*adv. Marc.* iv. 2) speaks of St. Paul being Luke's "illuminator" and "master."

From the "we-section" in the Acts it is believed that St. Luke practised as a Christian medical man at Philippi, and that being attached to St. Paul on his second missionary journey, he became his medical adviser on the occasion of his illnesses. The inference is almost certain that Luke joined St. Paul at Troas (Acts xvi. 11—notice the "we") about the year 50 A.D., and was with him until his arrival at Rome about 59 A.D., except during the period which elapsed from St. Paul's departure from Philippi on the second missionary journey (Acts xvii. 1), and his arrival again there on the third (Acts xx. 5—notice the "us.").

Prof. Ramsay (*St. Paul the Traveller*, pp 200 ff., 389 f.) regards St. Luke as a Macedonian, who "belonged to a family that had a connexion with Antioch," in comparison with the above quoted statement by Eusebius. It is possible that St. Luke was of servile origin, for physicians were often slaves in those days. His conversion to Christianity was direct, and not by way of the Judaising method (Gal. iv.), which St. Paul so vehemently condemned.

St. Luke tells us that he was not an eye-witness of the Gospel events himself (i. 2), but that he received his information first-hand from those who were. This may possibly preclude the suggestion which is often made from being a likely one, that the Evangelist was (1) one of the seventy disciples, and (2) the companion of

Cleopas on the road to Emmaus (xxiv. 13), for neither of which identities is there any satisfactory foundation or trustworthy tradition.

ST. LUKE AN ARTIST.

Tradition, however, dating from the sixth century asserts that St. Luke was an artist, and that he had painted a picture of the Virgin Mary. An earlier tradition (third century) says that he was a bachelor ("having neither wife nor children"), and that he died in Bithynia at the age of 74, filled with the Holy Ghost. The traditions regarding his death vary, but Gregory Nazianzus (329-389) relates that he was martyred under the Domitian persecution. His bones are said to have been carried from Achaia to Constantinople, and buried there in the twentieth year of Constantius.

The purpose of his Gospel, as already suggested, is to teach the perfect humanity of the Divine Christ, and to this end he wrote especially for the Hellenic Israelites of the Gentile world. They were Greek-speaking, and inhabited that part of the Near East which was covered with Greek architecture and Hellenic art. Whether or not the tradition be true that St. Luke was a painter, there is no doubt but that he was an artist in thought. His Gospel contains some of the most priceless of pictures in the National Gallery of the Bible. He paints a beautiful portraiture of the human Christ. He loves the sick and the suffering, the women and the children; and with an innate love of art he depicts on the canvas of the Gospel the most picturesque events of our Lord's ministry, faithful in detail, and perfect in colour.

St. Luke's, says Renan (*Les Evangiles*, chap. xiii.), "is the most literary of the Gospels," and we may add, the most classical in character. He uses 261 words which are not found in the other Gospels, and when describing an event in common with St. Matthew or St. Mark he invariably rejects a non-classical word or

expression in favour of one which is classical. He writes in a more flowing style than that of the other Gospel writers, and possesses a more perfect command of the Greek language. He owns a greater purity in the choice of words, and has a particular fondness for medical terms (see Hobart, *The Medical Language of St. Luke*).

HIS INTERESTING PECULIARITIES.

He has many fascinating peculiarities. We see in him the first Christian hymnologist (for he preserves five hymns in all). He records an incident in each stage of our Lord's life (as a Babe, ii. 16; as a Child, ii. 27; as a Youth, ii. 40-42; as a Man, iii. 23). He mentions our Lord as praying on seven memorable occasions (iii. 21, v. 16, vi. 12, ix. 28, 29, xxii. 41-45, xxiii. 34, xxiii. 46). He rejoices in infancy; he loves womanhood; he grieves over the bereaved, and always cares for the *only child*. His is the Gospel of Thanksgiving, for he records seven occasions of "glorifying God," and mentions the word "grace" eight times.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF ISRAEL.

Although he writes to convince the Greek-speaking members of "the lost sheep of the House of Israel," he sees Jesus as the Friend of sinners, the Redeemer of Israel, and the Saviour of the world. He preaches the universality of the Gospel (ii. 32), and the cosmopolitan efficacy of the Cross. He maintains the Gospel of toleration (x. 33) and the good-tidings of freedom (i. 79). His is the Gospel of the Future, for it unveils the progression of Christianity. Finally St. Luke, with his perfect picture of the Historic Christ, shows how the Lord of Bethlehem fulfils "the consolation of Israel" and "the redemption of Jerusalem," to the heralding of that day when

"All flesh shall see the salvation of God."

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

THE Fourth Gospel has always been associated with the name of St. John, who has, by an almost unbroken tradition dating from the second century until the nineteenth, been regarded as the author. The book itself is anonymous, but it can hardly be called impersonal, as there are traces in three places of the identity and personality of the author (i. 14, cf. 1 John i. 1-3, xix. 35, xxi. 24), who claims for his record the authority and veracity of an eye-witness.

Since the nineteenth century, the fourth Gospel has, regarding its authorship, become a veritable battlefield. From the beginning of that century an incessant conflict has been waged between those who have supported the traditional view of its Johannine authorship, and those who have attributed the Gospel to an Ephesian elder, or an Alexandrian Christian philosopher belonging to the first half of the second century. We need not detail the controversy here, nor mention the names of the English and German theorists who have taken sides with regard to the authorship of the Gospel. It is sufficient for us to relate, however, that among the conservatives who have rightly defended the authorship of St. John we find such honoured names as those of Westcott and Sanday, and with them we are content to commit ourselves to the traditional view that St. John, and no one else but St. John, was the writer of the fourth Gospel.

THE FAME OF GALILEE.

St. John was one of the sons of Zebedee, a master-fisherman in a good position, whose business was probably situated at Bethsaida, one of the well-known

fishing towns on the Sea of Galilee. We know that their business was a profitable one, because St. Luke tells us that it consisted of a firm of partners (v. 10—*κοινωνοὶ*), who had in their employ fishermen who were "mates" (v. 7.—*μετόχοις*), and the business must in consequence have been of no small importance. In the days of our Lord, Galilee, a hive of industry, had reached the height of its fame. Edersheim (*Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, p. 40) tells us that "fishing on the lake was free to all," and it is probable that a hundred or more boats and fishing smacks could have been seen plying daily from one side of the Lake to the other. Choice kinds of fish were abundant, and, when properly prepared, were sent all over the world. In fact, both Tarichea and Bethsaida seem to have derived their names from the fish factories for which they were famous. The air of Galilee was invigorating, and it is no doubt partly owing to this fact that the Galilaeans were always so famous for being healthy, hardy, and brave. "The forests, meadows, and pastures, the tilled fields and gardens, the vineyards and olive orchards, the broad acres covered with wheat and barley, the fountains, streams, lakes, and rivers, the prosperous cities and towns which dotted the land, made the aspect of the country singularly varied and attractive." (See further, Merrill, *Galilee in the Time of Christ*, pp. 14-21).

THE DISCIPLE OF LOVE.

This lends interest to the Galilaeen question, to its Benjamite population, and to the fact that our Lord chose eleven of His disciples from that beautiful country. St. John may have been the son of Salome (Mark xv. 41), a sister of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in which case his father was a Benjamite and his mother a daughter of Judah. His sympathies were always

Galilæan, and he never hesitated in his Gospel to show his opposition to the *unbelieving* Jews. Both James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were men of a fiery temperament, a fact which explains the name of Boanerges being attached to them (Mark iii. 17). This is explained to mean "sons of thunder," and conveys the idea that they were hot-tempered. If so, how wonderful is the thought that under the influence and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. John should become known as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (St. John xiii. 23, xix. 36, xx. 2, xxi. 7, 20, 24)! His disposition was a stormy one, as easily ruffled as the waters of Galilee, but more quickly tempered and pacified through the sunshine of the constraining love of Jesus.

He was reckoned among the inner circle of our Lord's immediate disciples with Peter and James, and so was more constantly within the affectionate confidence of our Lord than were the remaining nine. He drank deeply of the wells of salvation; he learned to love as Christ lived, and to live as Christ loved; his is the Gospel of life and love, and therefore of liberty. With him love knows no end; it can never fail. To him love was eternal, and so also was life. The very essence of his Gospel is, therefore, eternal love and eternal life. He makes no reference to the human and Davidic ancestry of our Lord, for he sees the historic Christ eternal with the Godhead (x. 30), and always "the only begotten of the Father" (i. 14), and for this purpose he writes to prove the Divinity of our Lord (xx. 31).

THE MOST PASSIONATE OF GOSPELS.

St. John was intimately associated with our Lord in the essential features of His Ministry, and the resultant cause of his fellowship with Christ was the writing of this the most passionate of the Gospels, and the most

famous piece of doctrinal literature in the world. He was a thinker and an individualist; a teacher rather than a preacher; a theologian more than a mystic. He sees everything from the point of view of the eternal, and yet he is a practical man of affairs, for his vision of the gospel is that of the conquest of spirit over matter, of life over death.

He combines minute historical detail with lofty spiritual teaching. His thought is deeper than that of Plato, and yet simpler than that of Westcott. His ideas are more profound than those of Philo, and yet clearer than those of Browning. No book has had such influence upon the spiritual life of the Church as that of St. John's Gospel, and no writing has ever at one and the same time so inspired the mind of the greatest Christian thinker and the soul of the humblest Christian believer. It contains the highest sacramental teaching and the purest gospel preaching. It uplifts sinful man to the Throne of God in heaven, and it summons the Eternal Father to the footstool of the human heart.

Thus by miracle and discourse, by fellowship and re-union, does St. John bear witness to life as it is in Christ, and—"we know that his testimony is true."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. (I.).

THE Acts of the Apostles stands unique among the books of the Bible, and forms a fitting link between the Gospels and the Epistles.

The title, "Acts of the Apostles," though as old as Irenæus (who was Bishop of Lyons at the end of the second century), is in all probability not the original one, since it does not describe the character of the book. In the first half the apostles are hardly mentioned except St. Peter. St. John is only alluded to as the latter's companion (iii. 1, 11; iv. 13, 19), while St. James is only mentioned once (xii. 2), he being the only apostle whose death is recorded in the New Testament. On the other hand, the acts of Philip and Stephen, who were not apostles, are related fully, while in the second half of the book the record is wholly concerned with St. Paul.

THE CODEX SINAITICUS.

It is probable, therefore, that the volume was originally known as the "Acts," by which title it is called in the famous Codex Sinaiticus, one of the two oldest copies of the Greek Bible, dating from about A.D. 340, and designated by the Hebrew letter *Aleph* (א). The finding of this MS. by Tischendorf in the Monastery of St. Catherine, at Mount Sinai, reads like a novel, and an account of it can be seen in Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (pp. 59, 122-128). It was eventually placed in the Imperial Library at St. Peters-

burg, where, I am glad to say, on the authority of Sir Frederick G. Kenyon, M.A., D.Litt. (Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum), who told me personally, it is still preserved, not having been destroyed by the Bolsheviks.

THE AUTHOR.

From the opening words of the Acts ("the former treatise have I made, O Theophilus") it has been universally admitted that it was written by the author of the Third Gospel—St. Luke—and an unbroken tradition has supported this view. The earliest reference to the authorship of St. Luke is found in the *Muratorian Fragment* (about A.D. 170-175), while Irenæus (*Adv. Haer.* iii. 14, 1) definitely speaks of the author of the Acts as being Luke, who was "inseparable from Paul and his fellow-worker in the Gospel." This is also witnessed by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian.

THE DATE.

It is difficult to fix with certainty the date of the writing of the book, but there are many reasons for assuming that the Acts was written after A.D. 70, since it must have been written or published after St. Luke had issued his Gospel. In fact, both Irenæus and Eusebius state that it was written after the death of Paul and Peter.

There are some people who wonder why St. Luke did not record the death of St. Paul if he wrote the Gospel at so late a date. But against this it may be said that it is not the author's intention to write the biographies of the Apostles. He is writing a biography of the Gospel, and his intention is to show the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem and Judæa throughout the Roman world, until, in his closing picture, St. Luke shows St. Paul at Rome "preaching the king-

dom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all boldness, no man forbidding him."

A FINISHED BOOK.

Neither can it be said that the Acts terminates abruptly as an unfinished work. The book is (in keeping with the Third Gospel) picturesque and complete from beginning to end, as its artistic conclusion readily portrays to the careful student. It is polished in style, literary in merit, and classical in language. It is the reproduction of a perfect artist, and its tonal colours reveal the universality of the gospel through a redeemed Israel.

It is, however, more than probable that St. Luke had in mind the writing of a third treatise (λόγος), or it may even be possible that he did write a third book, which has been lost to us, unless further excavations in Bible lands should bring to light such a treasure, for no one ever knows what the spade may next produce in one country or in another. But up to the present moment we possess no writings of St. Luke other than the twenty-four chapters of his Gospel and the twenty-eight chapters of the Acts, each book being perfect and complete as a whole, and the latter the companion volume to the former.

COMPANION VOLUMES.

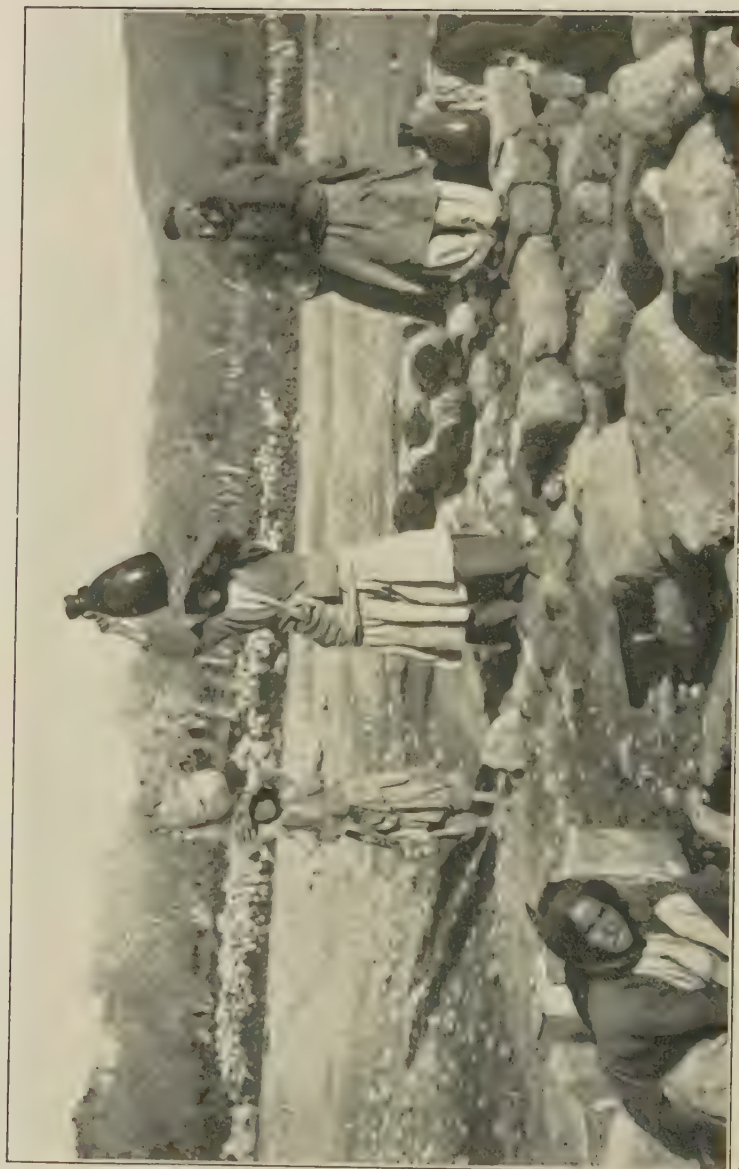
The fact that the Gospel and the Acts are companion volumes is seen by a careful study of the original Greek, as preserved for us in the great MSS. The Acts commences with the Ascension, at which point the Gospel finishes. But the salient feature in this respect is the number of letters and "stichoi" (στίχοι, lines) used by St. Luke in his two books, which are approximately the same, and which shows to us that he wrote the two

books of the same length, thus using an equal number of leaves, making the two volumes of equal size. Perhaps it will be interesting to the student to append the following table, as given by Nestle in his *Textual Criticism of the Greek Testament*, pp. 48, 49:—

			Letters.	Stichoi.
Matthew	...	...	89,295	2,480
Mark	...	...	55,550	1,543
<i>Luke</i>	...	...	97,714	2,714
John	...	...	70,210	1,950
<i>Acts</i>	...	...	94,000	2,610
3 John	...	...	1,100	31
Apocalypse	...	...	46,500	1,292

and from which it will be seen that St. Luke's Gospel and the Acts have, comparatively speaking, a similar number of letters and lines.

The inference is, therefore, that if St. Luke had ever contemplated publishing a third volume, it would have been likewise of the same length approximately.



Photograph by

THE WELL AT CANA IN GALILEE.

REV. G. H. LANCASTER.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. (II.).

“TO THE JEW FIRST.”

IT is quite impossible to over-estimate the importance of the apostolic principle of preaching the Gospel “to the Jew first.” There is an element of vital truth in the maxim, “Neglect the Jew and you will never win the world,” which has not as yet been sufficiently realised either by the Church or by the numerous missionary societies and organisations of the Church. The more Israel does for the winning of the Jews, the more she does for the evangelisation of the world. This is necessarily so, for it is God’s order. In the economy of the Divine Plan for the salvation of mankind one Jew influenced for Christ is worth the conversion of ten heathen (Zech. viii. 23), for “salvation is of the Jews” (St. John iv. 22). The preaching of the Gospel, therefore, to the Jew, through whose stumbling we have our calling, brings a great and reactionary blessing, not only upon those who have the welfare of the Jews at heart, but also upon those who are working among the heathen as well, and, therefore, upon the Missionary Church as a whole.

THE APOSTOLIC PROGRAMME.

If we turn to the Acts of the Apostles, which is perhaps the best text-book in the world for studying the methods of missionary organisation and results, it is amazing to note with what great earnestness of

purpose the Apostles always, upon every occasion, preached the Gospel "to the Jew first," in their endeavours to proclaim God's Kingdom from one land to another. In every town, island, country, or province, they invariably went to the Jews first, either in the synagogues or in the Jewish colonies, or in the Jewish quarters, and not infrequently they visited the Jews in their homes, thus leaving no stone unturned in order to hold up the story of the Cross "to the Jew first." We also note that the more the Gospel was preached to the Jews, the more the Church of Christ began to spread, and, in fact, it will be seen that, as a general rule, the Israelite Greeks and other Gentiles who were converted were largely won through the way in which the Jews were evangelised. In Apostolic days the rule was "*Many Jews converted, and few Gentiles,*" but, alas! the modern results have been "*many Gentiles (heathen) converted, but few Jews.*" Is not this latter result to be attributed to the fact that the modern Church has lost that love for Jewish souls which the Apostolic Church possessed, and that the Church as a whole (and not her missionary societies alone) has forgotten the Apostolic programme "to the Jew first"?

If this principle were to be reintroduced (and it has never been repealed), the full tide of missionary evangelisation would rise very quickly in all parts of the world, and there would result a spiritual revival in the Churches at home.

THE NEED FOR TO-DAY.

It may be pointed out that when our Lord gave the Church her commission, He intended her to be a whole-hearted missionary Church. But this commission had a twofold aspect. The one is recorded by St. Matthew, in his closing verses, who gives the *General Command*. The other is recorded by St. Luke, who gives the *Particular Command*, as outlined in the beginning of

the Acts, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem [the centre of Judaism] and in all Judæa [the Jewish State], and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Dean Alford, in his famous Commentary, says that the apostles "understood this command only of Jews scattered through the world," and assuming this to be the case, it at once shows how urgently important did our Lord and the Apostles regard Jewish missions in the light of the evangelisation of the world.

Now that Jerusalem has surrendered herself into the wardship of Christian nations, and now that the British Government has made its memorable declaration regarding the future of the Jewish people, it is to be urged that the Church and all her world-wide missionary societies should place the bringing home to the Jewish nation the love of God in Christ first and foremost in the spiritual work of the day.

ANALYSIS.

In order to explain the Apostolic principle "to the Jew first," the following brief analysis is drawn up from the Acts of the Apostles, showing how this principle was the governing factor in the earliest days of the Church. Owing to space it is necessarily abbreviated, but perhaps enough is produced to prove the working of the principle.

i. 8.—See above.

ii. 5-11.—Jewish Dispersionists gathered together at Jerusalem.

ii. 14-47.—Gospel preached "to the Jew first"; result, 3,000 converts.

iii. 8.—Lame man healed. This verse proves him to have been a Jew, so St. Peter heals "the Jew first."

iii. 26.—"Unto you [Jews] first," etc.

iv. 1-4.—St. Peter and St. John imprisoned because they were so successful when they went “to the Jew first,” resulting in 5,000 converts.

iv. 36.—The conversion of Barnabas, a Cyprian Levite, who soon takes up the same principle and applies it to his own life’s work.

v. 28.—“Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.” Fulfilment of i. 8.

vi. 7.—Conversion of Jewish priests in Jerusalem, and resultant blessing.

vii.—Martyrdom of St. Stephen, the first Hebrew Christian martyr; he had a Greek name, and so was either a Grecian Jew, or a Hellenistic Israelite.

viii.—Samaria evangelised (cf. i. 8).

ix.—Conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

ix. 15, 20, 22, 29.—Especially chosen to preach to the Gentiles, yet he always, without fail, goes “to the Jew first.” The result proves that the more he goes to the Jew first, the more he wins the Gentiles.

x. 45.—Great astonishment caused because the Gentiles were converted as well as the Jews. (To-day great surprise if the Jew is converted!)

xi. 19.—Gospel preached to *Jews only*.

COMMENCEMENT OF MISSIONARY JOURNEYS.

xiii. 4.—Intention to evangelise Cyprus, a Roman (Gentile) Senatorial province.

xiii. 5, 6.—St. Paul and St. Barnabas go straight to the synagogue at Salamis, and then go through the “whole island” (R.V.), perhaps to visit the Jewish colonies, and eventually reach Paphos. Here they run across the Jew, Sergius Paulus, through whom they become introduced to the Proconsul, who then becomes converted. So, if the Apostles had not sought out the Jews first the great Gentile Proconsul would not have been converted. And so the principle always works.

xiii. 14, 42.—At Antioch they go once again to the synagogue, for they know that they can only win the city for Christ through the Jews. According to one rendering (A.V.), the Gospel was so successful among the Jews that the Gentiles became jealous, and wanted to hear it themselves!

xiii. 44.—Result, the whole city is reached by the Apostles.

xiii. 45.—This made the Jews jealous in turn.

xiii. 46.—Opposition sets in (as always happens). St. Paul explains the necessity of going “to the Jew first,” but adds, “Lo! we turn to the Gentiles,” though, as a matter of fact, he cannot neglect the Jews (xiv. 1).

CHAPTER XV.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. (III.).

“TO THE JEW FIRST.”—*Continued.*

ACTS xiv. 1.—The first thing Paul and Barnabas do in Iconium is to go “into the synagogue of the Jews.” Result, numbers of Jews *and Greeks* believed!

xiv. 5, 6, 7.—After combined assault made by Gentiles and Jews, the apostles fled to Lystra and Derbe. Lystra, the home of Timothy, contained a poor Jewish quarter, with no synagogue. The town is visited four times by St. Paul, probably each time to visit the Jewish quarter.

xiv. 8.—Result—healing of the cripple, probably a Jew.

xiv. 27.—Apostles report to the Church at Antioch the result of the first missionary journey, *i.e.*, that God “had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” through the Gospel being preached “to the Jew first.”

JERUSALEM.

xv.—First Great Church Council at Jerusalem, all of whose members and delegates were Hebrew Christians. The chairman, St. James, was a Hebrew Christian and Bishop of Jerusalem. *N.B.*—Eusebius (*H.E.* iv. 5) tells us that the first fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem, in succession, were Hebrew Christians “of the circumcision.”

xvi. 9, 13.—St. Paul has a vision in the night. A heathen Greek asks for the Gospel. —*N.B.*—St. Paul

responds by going "to the Jew first" at Philippi! It is only a poor Jewish colony, so St. Paul knows that he will find the Jews by the "river-side," the customary place of prayer for Jews when there is no synagogue.

xvi. 15, 33.—Result—Lydia, a wealthy woman who was probably an Israelite by descent, who then became a Jewish proselyte, becomes converted and baptised with all her household. We know she was wealthy, because she is in a position to afford hospitality. Homer (II. iv. 141) speaks of the flourishing purple-dyeing trade of the neighbourhood. Lydia, then, probably subscribes to St. Paul's missionary work; the Gentile gaoler and all his household then become converted and baptised. Hence the result of the vision lies in the conversion of Jews first, and then of Gentiles.

xvii. 1, 2, 4.—St. Paul, "as his custom was," entered the synagogue at Thessalonica, and considered it worth while to spend three weeks preaching the Gospel to the Jews there, in order to win the city. The result was that some of the Jews believed, and "a great multitude of devout Greeks, and of the chief women not a few." Had he gone straight to the Gentiles, there would have been dismal failure. God's order is always the best.

xvii. 10.—The same happens again in Beroea, with the same successful results.

ATHENS.

xvii. 16, 17, 18, 22.—A very striking event. St. Paul wants to win Athens, "the Oxford of the Near East." He is greatly stirred when he sees the terrible idolatry of the city. How can he best evangelise it? Does he go to the temples and preach to the worshippers? Does he go to the colleges and lecture-rooms? Does he gather the youth of the city round him in the open air, as did Socrates? No, he does nothing of the kind. There is only one thing he can do—"Therefore disputed

he in the synagogue with the Jews." He obeys the missionary commission, and goes "to the Jew first," and then gets a hearing, so that he is able to give his famous address at Mars' Hill, and leaves the rest to God.

CORINTH.

xviii. 1, 2, 26, 11, 6, 7, 8, 9, 17.—The same thing occurs at Corinth, "the Liverpool of the Near East." St. Paul wonders how he can best evangelise this wonderful city of luxury and vice, of business and commerce? Shall he go down to the docks and talk with the seamen? Shall he go to the wealthy West End and reach the people there? Shall he go into the heart of the city and try and convert the leading business men of the day? No, certainly not. Once again he goes "to the Jew first." He seeks out a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of the same craft as his own. That is all. The rest follows on naturally. Aquila becomes converted, also Priscilla, his wife, and they in their turn are the means of converting Apollos. Meanwhile, St. Paul spent every Sabbath for about a year and a half "teaching the Word of God" and reasoning in the synagogue. But the same thing happened here as at Antioch, for some of the Jews opposed themselves against St. Paul, and blasphemed, and the latter said, "From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." But notice that *he does not do so*, for he immediately went into the house of a man named Justus, or Titus, who lived absolutely next door to the synagogue, with the result that Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and therefore one of the leading Jews of the day, became converted, and he is one of the only converts ever baptised by St. Paul (1 Cor. i. 14). This results in the conversion and baptism of numerous Corinthians, and St. Paul has a comforting and reassuring vision of God's protecting love and purpose,

while further efforts at opposition against him are failures, owing to the impartial justice of Gallio.

EPHESUS.

xviii. 19.—The same thing happens at Ephesus, where St. Paul once again “entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.”

xviii. 28.—Apollos is not slow to follow St. Paul’s example, and he begins his work by convincing “the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ.” If St. Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos had not been faithful to the principle of going “to the Jew first,” one of the most spiritual of the Churches might never have been founded, and perhaps one of the most beautiful of the Epistles might never have been written (the Epistle to the Ephesians).

xix. 1, 8, 17, 21.—St. Paul returns to Ephesus, and after confirming the Christians he spent three months in the synagogue, ever mindful of the Apostolic principle. The result is that both Jews and Greeks became converted, “and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” He now yearns to go to Jerusalem, and also to Rome, doubtless with the same aim in view.

xx. 17.—St. Paul sends for the elders from Ephesus, and reminds them that he had testified “both to the Jews and also to the Greeks [*N.B.*—The order “the Jew first”], repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” Had the Jews been neglected, these Greeks would never have been won for Christ. He makes his principle and programme quite clear to his listeners.

ROME.

xxviii. 16, 17, 24; Rom. i. 16.—St. Paul now finds himself at Rome after all, but as a prisoner, and not as a free agent. He wonders how he can, even though a prisoner in chains, evangelise this great Roman metro-

polis for Christ. He is not free to walk down the streets as at Athens. He is unable to preach to the crowds as at Mars' Hill, neither can he seek out the Jews as at Corinth and elsewhere. What can he do? Apparently he spends three days and three nights in indecision, though we can be certain that he was spending that time in prayer. Then, all of a sudden, the secret was revealed to him—"Because you cannot go to the Jews, invite the chief of the Jews to come to you." And so he "called the chief of the Jews together," and they accepted his invitation and came to him. "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." And once again this last glimpse of St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles shows us his faithfulness to the firmly established principle: "If Israel wants to win the world for Christ, the Jew must be placed first and foremost in the front ranks of the missionary work of the Church, and then all will be well."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. (IV.).

IN the last two chapters we have been considering the principle upon which the Apostolic programme for preaching the Gospel was developed along the lines of going "to the Jew first" in every town, village, island or province into which the Apostles entered for the founding of the Churches and for the extension of the kingdom of God.

But we have noted previously that St. Luke teaches the universality of the Gospel and the cosmopolitan efficacy of the Cross. Whereas he lays great and undoubted stress upon the evangelisation of the Jews, it will be our purpose now to show that St. Luke visualises the winning of the whole wide world for Christ, so that if his programme was to record the preaching of the Gospel "to the Jew first" it is only because he knows that the winning of the Jews and the redemption of Israel are the foundation principles which lead up to the evangelisation of the world.

The Acts of the Apostles readily falls into two divisions. The work of witnessing for Christ "in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria," occupies the first half of the book (i.-xii.), while the work of doing so "unto the uttermost part [not *parts*] of the earth occupies the second half (xiii.-xxviii.).

THE JEWISH PROBLEM.

Although, as has been carefully explained, St. Luke shows how important it was for the Apostles to evan-

gelise the Jews wheresoever they went, he nevertheless takes pains to show that Christianity has to be independent of Judaism, as St. Paul teaches in the Epistle to the Galatians, and consequently he pictures the way in which the doors of the Gospel are thrown upon to all and any who will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. To prove this St. Luke emphasises not only the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews, but also the winning of the Gentiles, as illustrated by the repetition of Peter's vision (x. 10-16, xi. 5-10), which serves to remove the conceit of the Judaisers who objected to the Gentiles being placed on an equality with them in the sight of God. There was then a Jewish problem in those days as there is to-day! But if the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.) defeated the Judaizing party, the latter was not silenced, for St. Paul fought it throughout the length of his ministry. Its members doubted Paul's claim to apostleship (1 Cor. ix. 1; Gal. i. 11, 12); they sneered at his personality (2 Cor. x. 10, xi. 6); they did their best to thwart him in his work (Gal. i. 7, iii. 1, v. 7, vi. 12). Yet the Acts clearly reveals that spirit of fairness and toleration which characterised the members of the early Church. While the Judaizing principle was condemned, it nevertheless followed that those Jews who accepted Christianity were not called upon to reject the Mosaic Law, nor were Gentile converts allowed to break certain of its rules (xv. 20, 21). Similarly St. Paul himself circumcised Timothy (xvi. 3) for the sake of the Jews, and shaved his own head in Cenchrea "because he had a vow" (xviii. 18), in order to satisfy "the many thousands of Jews which believe . . . and are all zealous for the law" (xxi. 20). This transition stage is interesting, and with it we may compare the gradual passing in later days of the Jewish Sabbath (which was at first kept by the Hebrew Christians together with the Sunday) to the fuller adoption of

“ the Lord’s Day,” the first day of the week, our Christian Sunday.

THE GRECIAN PROBLEM.

Nor was this form of the Jewish problem the only difficulty which beset the enthusiastic members of the early Church. There was evidently a spirit of superiority and conservatism which had to be suppressed, as is illustrated by the complaint raised by “ the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration ” (vi. 1). This was another difficulty, and the Church was right to give the matter their earliest attention. These “Grecians” may have been Greek-speaking Jews, settled out of Palestine, and who no longer spoke Aramaic, or they may have been Greek-speaking Israelites, who had not altogether thrown over their thirst for the law and the “daily ministration.” In either case it showed the tendency which was evolving to admit all believers into a condition of equality before God, whether or not they were Jewish, Israelitish, or Gentile converts.

THE DISCIPLINE PROBLEM.

The instances of Ananias and Simon Magus showed that the early Church was on the strict defensive against deceit and corruption, nor was the human element eliminated in those early days of Christianity, as is seen by the lack of zeal illustrated by the desertion of John Mark at Perga in Pamphylia (xiii. 13), and by the personal contentions which took place between Paul and Barnabas (xv. 39).

The early Church thus struggled to get securely and permanently on a footing, and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus plainly showed that the Church must not be cramped by any narrowness of vision, for he was

chosen, as the Lord said unto him, " to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel " (ix. 15).

THE GENTILE PROBLEM.

The spread of the Gospel is explained in the second half of the book (xiii.-xxviii.), and it becomes apparent that although St. Paul goes without fail, as we have seen, " to the Jew first," his real commission is to "the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." The word " Gentile " is capable of a double interpretation. It is really the technical word that is used to refer to the non-Jews of the day. But amongst the many non-Jews to whom St. Paul preached the Gospel there were numerous Israelites. These were either the remnant of the great Israelite dispersion of the 8th century B.C., *i.e.*, the remnant of those who had left the Assyrian land of captivity, and had not migrated through Europe to the British Isles, or the remnant of those who had quitted Palestine long before the Assyrian captivity and had settled in Greece, Asia Minor, and along the Mediterranean basin. The conversion of these scattered Israelites aided in the progress of Israel's redemption, and it was undoubtedly amongst them chiefly that St. Paul planted the Churches on his three great missionary journeys.

We cannot here trace the origin and confirmation of the Churches, nor can we go into the details concerned with St. Paul's missionary journeys. Any school or college text-book on the Acts will serve for that important study, but in passing we must lay stress upon what Prof. Ramsay and his followers call the South Galatian theory in support of our belief in the Israelitish origin of the Church. St. Luke sees the Gospel spread from small beginnings in Jerusalem until it reached the great centre of the Roman Empire—" and so we came to

Rome " (xxviii. 14). Here St. Paul proclaims and predicts the acceptance of the Gospel by the Israelite world, as he says, " Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles [Israelites], *and they will hear it.*"

THE KEYNOTE OF THE ACTS.

The value of the Acts of the Apostles as a missionary text-book is priceless, apart from its spiritual influence. Its keynote is the fact of the resurrection of the Lord (i. 22, ii. 32, ii. 15, iv. 2, iv. 33, v. 32, x. 39ff., xiii. 31, xvii. 18, xxii. 15, xxiii. 6, xxvi. 16, 23), and by faith, baptism, and the receiving of the Holy Ghost it unfolds the universality of the Gospel through " the Jew first," then the children of Israel, until " the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

It proclaims a special message " to all that are afar off " (ii. 39), an expression which is interpreted to refer to scattered Israel, and confirms the history and doctrine of the Epistles. It thereby illustrates the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, which had foretold the redemption of Israel through the Cross and the resurrection of Christ. That is why the book lays such great stress upon the winning of the Gentiles, and the breaking down of the barrier that hitherto had seemed insuperable (ii. 39, iii. 26, x. 10-16, xi. 5, 10, x. 35, 36, 38, 43, xi. 18, xiv. 27, xv. 17).

CHAPTER XVII.

ST. PAUL.

ST. PAUL was without doubt the greatest missionary the Church has ever had, being the Apostle especially called to the Israelitish and Gentile world (Acts ix. 15).

He is first known to us under the name of Saul (Acts vii. 58), and being of the tribe of Benjamin, of which fact he was very proud (Rom. xi. 1; Phil. iii. 5), it is probable that he was named Saul, either directly or indirectly, after the king whom that tribe gave to Israel at the commencement of the monarchy. But Saul was his Hebrew name. Being also a Roman citizen (Acts xxii. 26-28), he must have had three Roman names as well. We do not know what his *prænomen* and *nomen* were, but we do know that his *cognomen* was Paul. Some writers have assumed that Saul did not possess the name Paul until he took the latter after his contact with the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus in Cyprus (Acts xiii. 7), but it is perhaps more reasonable to suppose that as his ministry was at that point leading him to travel and preach throughout the Roman Empire, he dropped his Hebrew name in preference for his Roman *cognomen*, which would henceforth be more appropriate for the work that lay before him.

HIS CITIZENSHIP.

St. Paul had not bought his Roman citizenship, as had so many of the court sycophants during the reign of Claudius. Nor was he a Roman citizen simply because he had the freedom of Tarsus (Acts xxi. 39,

xxii. 3), for Tarsus was not a Roman colony, it being the capital of Cilicia. Probably, as Ramsay points out (*St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 31, 32), "the family [of St. Paul] had been planted in Tarsus with full rights as part of a colony settled there by one of the Seleucid kings in order to strengthen their hold on the city." Although Paul was himself poor, and had to work for his livelihood as a tent-maker (Acts xviii. 3, xx. 33 ff., cf. also 1 Cor. ix. 15; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8), there is evidence pointing to the fact that his family was rich and of a good position. It is, further, likely that he was disowned and cast off by his family in consequence of his conversion, and his attitude to the Gentiles. In addition to this, it was the custom for all Jewish boys to be taught a trade. In all probability, however, St. Paul was reconciled to his family in the latter part of his ministry, as we gather him to have been a prisoner of distinction at Rome, living "in his own hired house," thus suggesting that he was no longer poor, in addition to which he was not completely alienated from his family, since, on a previous occasion, his sister's son saved his life (Acts xxiii. 16).

AS A ROMAN.

The citizenship of St. Paul meant much to him, for he emphasises the fact that he was *freeborn*. Perhaps his father or his grandfather had done some signal service to the State, and was rewarded with the highly-prized gift of Roman citizenship. St. Paul thus turned his privilege to good account, for it prevented him from suffering illegal treatment at Philippi and Jerusalem (Acts xvi. 37, xxii. 35). Nor were his beloved Philippian converts slow to comprehend the importance and value of his citizenship, and the doctrine of the heavenly citizenship, as the Philippians themselves were very proud of their city being a

colony, and of their being therefore Roman citizens (Acts xvi. 12, 21, cf. Phil. i. 27, R.V. marg., iii. 20; Eph. ii. 19). His citizenship gave St. Paul unique advantages throughout the Roman Empire, which he was quick to utilise on behalf of the Gospel. Nor must it be forgotten that there was a large element of pure Israelitish stock among the peoples of the Greco-Roman countries through which St. Paul travelled, and amidst whom he founded the Churches.

AS A GREEK.

On the other hand, apart from his being a Roman citizen, St. Paul was a Greek citizen. He expressly stated, "I am a Jew of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city" (Acts xxi. 39). He, therefore, possessed great freedom and authority in the Greek cities which he evangelised, whether or not they were Roman colonies.

AS A HEBREW.

Again, St. Paul had occasion to lay stress upon the fact that he was "an Hebrew of Hebrews" (Phil. iii. 5). This literally means "a Hebrew *sprung* from Hebrews," as Ramsay points out, or "a Hebrew and of Hebrew ancestry," as Lightfoot suggests (*Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 147). He emphasises the fact with ancestral pride that he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. xi. 1). Nor could he have forgotten that Benjamin had proved loyal to Judah, Jerusalem, and the Temple, at the disruption of the kingdom (1 Kings xi. 36, xii. 23). Benjamin had from the earliest times held the post of honour in the armies of the nation. "After thee, O Benjamin," was a battle-cry in Israel (Jud. v. 14; Hos. v. 8). With pride would St. Paul remember that his historic ancestor was the only one of the twelve patriarchs to be born in the land of promise. Neither would he forget that it was through

the Benjamite Esther and Mordecai that the great national deliverance of the Jews took place, resulting in the yearly festival of Purim (see my *Old Testament Studies*, Chapter XXVI.).

AS AN ISRAELITE.

But as we have seen before, the Benjamites really belonged to the upper House of Israel, so that St. Paul was an Israelite by race, and only a Jew by religion. We therefore find that St. Paul possessed a fourfold privilege. To the Hebrews he was a Jew by religion. To the Israelites he was a Benjamite-Israelite. To the Greeks he was a Tarsian citizen. To the Romans he was a Roman citizen. He could, therefore, speak and write in Aramaic and Greek fluently, while he must have been thoroughly acquainted with the Latin tongue and with the classics generally. He was a man of many parts, versatile, cultured, and travelled, and so wielded an immense influence, aided by a distinguished personality.

AS A CHRISTIAN.

Born at Tarsus, the Apostle was educated at its famous University. But his legal and religious knowledge, apart from that which he learned from the Stoics in his native town, was instilled into him by the intellectual Pharisee, Gamaliel, at Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 3, xxvi. 4, cf. v. 34, ff). Although he must have been in the Holy City during the earthly lifetime of our Lord, he would probably never have seen our Lord in the days of his flesh. But an Apostle had to be one who was a witness of Christ's resurrection (Acts i. 22). Therefore, St. Paul received a special vision of the Risen Lord in the well-known incident on the road to Damascus. But his conversion took place at the right psychological moment, for the following reason. As "a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (Acts xxiii. 6, R.V.), he was bound to believe in the doctrine of the resur-

rection. But St. Paul found that, in company with many Jews, he could not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. He therefore attached himself to the high priest who belonged to the Sadducaic party (Acts ix. 1, 2), in order to destroy the new Christian society. He thus found himself on the horns of a dilemma—an impossible position! Here was a Pharisee making overtures to the Sadducees in direct opposition to his convictions and upbringing. And so it was that “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity,” and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus could not have taken place at a more opportune moment.

Our subsequent study of the Pauline Epistles will give us an insight into his Christology and doctrines. The letters to the Churches reveal his teaching relating to the redemption of Israel and the building up, not only of our most holy Faith, but also of the national Church of Israel, eventually committed to the British and Anglo-Saxon peoples, as a Divine and Apostolic trust, for the conversion of the whole world.

ST. PAUL IN BRITAIN.

That the first Christian Church was planted here in Britain by Joseph of Arimathæa is well known in the early history of Glastonbury (Avalon). That St. Paul himself, after being liberated from his Roman prison, quickly followed in the wake of the Gospel, and preached in Britain—especially in London, at Lud-gate hill, to which the noble Cathedral that perpetuates his name gives its eloquent testimony—is clearly evidenced, as is also the spiritual influence which St. Paul had over the royal family of Britain. For the witness and confirmation of these invaluable facts, the student may be referred to Stillingfleet’s *Origines Britannicæ* (folio edition, 1685; modern edition of Pantin, 1842), and especially to Morgan’s *St. Paul in Britain*, which latter is a remarkable work, and full of indisputable evidence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

THE word *Epistle* means a letter, or written communication (and not, as a little girl once said, the wife of an apostle " !), and comes from the Greek *ἐπιστολή*, and Latin *epistola* (sometimes spelt *epistula*).

In the New Testament there are twenty-one Epistles, of which thirteen are known to be written by St. Paul, exclusive of the Epistle to the Hebrews, regarding the authorship of which there is much speculation and uncertainty.

ANCIENT WRITING MATERIAL.

It is now practically certain that the original New Testament books were written on rolls of papyrus. The latter was used as writing material for thousands of years. The oldest papyrus known just as we have it was written over 4,500 years ago ; but even this is merely the copy of a treatise a thousand years older. The history of the world's languages can be read from the papyri ; for these contain records written in hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic Egyptian, Coptic, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Arabic, as well as the oldest Greek and Latin script in existence, while, it may be observed, some of the most valued ancient documents in almost every European language were preserved in this imperishable material.

THE PREPARATION OF PAPYRUS.

The process by which papyrus paper was prepared consisted in taking the white pith of the stem of the papyrus water-plant (which thrives excellently in the

damp levels of the Nile, and by the Waters of Merom in Galilee), and in cutting it into long thin slips. These were laid down vertically, and other strips were placed horizontally over them. The two layers were thereupon pasted together. Sometimes, as in the case of the Egyptian papyrus, they were pasted together, as Pliny tells us, with the aid of Nile water; sometimes they were pressed together into a single sheet. These sheets were subsequently dried in the sun, hammered and rolled into flat layers, and then rubbed thoroughly with some smooth substance, until ready for use. Afterwards they were pasted together to form a roll of the desired length. In proof of this, certain specimens over one hundred feet in length are still in existence.

PARCHMENT AND VELLUM.

In the second Christian century, parchment and vellum were used for writing material. Their advantage lay in the fact that they could be written upon on both sides. The difference between these two materials was that parchment was made from sheepskin, and vellum from calf. They are both still used in Egypt for legal documents. But parchment and vellum were more costly than papyrus, and so they were used for centuries for Church Bibles and legal documents; indeed, nothing could exceed the fine purple skins written in gold and silver which have come down to us from the third to the sixth centuries. Yet for the private New Testaments of the early centuries and for the ordinary letter writing and business purposes, the tough and less costly papyrus was most generally used.

PAPYRUS THE MOST SACRED.

There were different grades of papyrus, of which the best was called *Hieratica* (or *Augusta*), in honour of

the Emperor. But there can be no doubt that each of the New Testament writers wrote upon the medium or poorer qualities; for, as Cobern says (*New Archæological Studies*, p. 5), "in all the years since linen paper came into common use—in the eighth or ninth century of our era—it has never been honoured as were the humble papyri of that first century which received the autographs of the apostles and evangelists as they told the story of the Man of Nazareth."

Now, the Epistles were written to sustain the preaching of the Gospel, to strengthen the youthful Churches in Palestine, Asia, Greece, and Italy, and to support Christians through all time in their most holy faith. Further, they were written to supplement the teaching of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Apocalypse, and thus to render the full Canon of the New Testament complementary to that of the Old.

THIRTEEN PAULINE EPISTLES.

St. Paul was the most voluminous of the New Testament writers. His Epistles cover a period of about fifteen years, neither need we assume that he wrote no more than the thirteen Letters which have come down to us. These may be chronologically grouped under four headings, although it will be evident that they are not placed chronologically in the Bible.

1 *Epistles of the Second Missionary Journey* (Acts xv. 36—xviii. 22).

This journey included St. Paul's first visit to Europe—Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, A.D. 51-54.

First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

Epistle to the Galatians.

2 *Epistles of the Third Missionary Journey* (Acts xviii. 23—xxi. 20).

This journey included more than two years spent in visits to the Churches in Galatia, Phrygia, and Ephesus; a renewed visit to Macedonia, and also three months in Corinth, A.D. 54-58.

First Epistle to the Corinthians.

Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Epistle to the Romans.

3. *Epistles of the Roman Imprisonment* (Acts xxviii. 14-31), A.D. 60-63.

Epistle to the Ephesians (or Churches of Asia).

Epistle to the Colossians.

Epistle to Philemon.

Epistle to the Philippians.

4. *The Pastoral Epistles.*

The first two were written after St. Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome, as we gather from their internal contents. It was during this period that he visited Spain and Britain. A.D. 63-67.

First Epistle to Timothy.

Epistle to Titus.

But when a prisoner again at Rome, and perhaps not long before he was called to receive "the crown of righteousness," St. Paul wrote what seems to have been his last letter, *i.e.*, the

Second Epistle to Timothy. A.D. 67 or 68.

* * * * *

We shall next proceed to study the Pauline Epistles, not in their chronological order, generally accepted as above, but in the order in which we find them in the New Testament. We shall, in our studies, lay continually before the student the important fact that St. Paul wrote his letters to redeemed Israelites, and that the nucleus of the Churches was mainly composed of the redeemed members of the House of Israel.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (I.).

THE Epistle to the Romans was written in the year 58 A.D. by St. Paul during his three months' stay at Corinth (Acts xix. 21), in the course of his Third Missionary Journey. It belongs to what is known as the central group of Epistles, and with it may be bracketed the two Epistles to the Corinthians.

THE CHURCH AT ROME.

Much speculation has centred around the origin of the Church at Rome. It is quite clear that St. Paul was not its founder (Rom. i. 10-12), for, when writing the Epistle, he tells the Roman Christians how much he is looking forward to seeing them, and it is equally evident that he had never up to that moment even set foot in Rome.

Neither is there any proof whatsoever to support the tradition which is still believed in by some people at the present time, that St. Peter was the founder of the Roman Church. According to this tradition, which is quoted by Eusebius (about 325 A.D.), and traceable back another hundred years, St. Peter was Bishop of Rome for twenty-five years. But assuming that he was martyred about 67 or 68 A.D., it would mean that he was in Rome as early as the year 42. But he was still in Jerusalem in 51, when the great Council was held (Acts xv.). In all probability there was truth in the tradition which states that our Lord commanded the apostles to remain in Jerusalem for twelve years after His Ascension, a

tradition which was current towards the end of the second century.

EARLY TRADITIONS.

Again, had St. Peter founded the Church at Rome, or had he been its first bishop, it is exceedingly unlikely that St. Paul would have omitted all reference to him when writing the Epistle. The relations between the two Apostles, and of both to the work of missions in general, would almost compel some allusion to such a visit by St. Peter, had it taken place. But it must not be forgotten that the sub-apostolic traditions relating to the founding of the Church in Rome are "Petro-Pauline" in character. That is to say, the earliest testimony on the subject ascribes the foundation of the Roman Church to St. Peter and St. Paul *jointly*. But this probably implies two facts which gave rise to the belief in the Apostolic foundation of that Church: (1) that St. Peter and St. Paul were the great apostles to the circumcision and the uncircumcision, respectively, and were therefore regarded as being the founders of the Church directly after our Lord, and (2) that these two Apostles were martyred at Rome, and that the Church on the Tiber received its consecration by the shedding of their blood.

NON-APOSTOLIC FOUNDATION.

But not every early tradition claims an Apostolic origin of the Roman Church. The fourth-century writer known as Ambrosiaster, himself probably a member of the Roman Church, does not support the tradition of Irenæus (*Adv. Haer.* iii. 1), that "Matthew among the Hebrews published his Gospel in their own dialect, when Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and founding the Church." He denies the Apostolic origin. We cannot do better than quote therefore the

following words (Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 803): "It should be noted that the Church at Rome was not an Apostolic foundation. The Christian community came into existence there before either St. Paul or St. Peter visited the city" (see also Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. IV., p. 297, and Sanday and Headlam, *Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, Introduction, par. 3).

Nor is there any authority for the belief that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome. All the known facts are directly opposed to this tradition. We have seen that St. Peter could not have founded the Church in the capital of the great Roman Empire. We have also seen that St. Peter could not have been at Rome before 58 A.D. There is nothing to prove that this Apostle went to Rome at any time long anterior to his martyrdom, some ten years after St. Paul wrote the Epistle. But we gather from the Epistle that the Roman Church was a flourishing one, so much so that the faith of the Roman Christians was "spoken of throughout the whole world" (i. 8). When St. Paul wrote his letter the Church at Rome was strongly entrenched; it had not fallen from grace like the Galatian Church, nor had it been corrupted by luxury and vice, as was the case with the Corinthian Church. Indeed, this was the more remarkable considering the rule of Nero (who was Emperor from 54-68 A.D.). Tacitus (*Annals*, xv. 38) describes the burning of Rome, a crime which was attributed to Nero (Suetonius, *Lives of the Cæsars*, Nero, 38), who sacked the city and persecuted the Christians (Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 44), perhaps as a vengeance upon the terrific defeat which the Romans received in Britain (61 A.D.) at the hands of the Christian Britons.

A GREAT PROBLEM.

How, then, can we account for the "non-apostolic" foundation of the Roman Church, and of its glorious

witness to the Faith, so much so that, in spite of persecution, fire, and sword, its fame had spread "throughout the whole world" before ever a Peter or a Paul had visited its Christians and "confirmed" the Church?

To those who have rightly rejected the Petro-Pauline foundation of the Roman Church this has always been an interesting problem. Some writers have assumed that the Church was founded in Rome by converts from Jerusalem as a result of the Day of Pentecost. Others have taught that disciples and friends of St. Paul made during his First and Second Missionary Journeys had founded the Church in the Latin capital. Neither of these theories is impossible. But perhaps we are guided nearer to the truth by a most important piece of evidence which is given by both Irenæus and Eusebius. They agree in saying that the first Bishop of Rome was

LINUS.

Now, Linus is mentioned once in the New Testament (2 Tim. iv. 21), where we find that he was in Rome at the date of St. Paul's second imprisonment, when the latter wrote the last of his Epistles (2 Tim.). Once we shut our eyes to the tradition that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome—as all facts are contrary to it—we are encouraged to observe that Linus was the first Bishop of Rome. Irenæus (*Haer.*, III. iii. 3) says, "Peter and Paul, when they founded and built up the Church of Rome, committed the office of its episcopate to Linus." Eusebius (*H.E.*, iii. 13) says, "Of the Church of the Romans after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, the first to be appointed to the office of Bishop was Linus, of whom Paul makes mention at the end of his letter to Timothy." And Eusebius relates further (iii. 13) that Linus was Bishop for twelve years. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* says, "His name [Linus] appears at the head of all

the lists of the Bishops of Rome," so it is agreed by all writers that the Linus mentioned by St. Paul, when he was a prisoner at Rome shortly before his martyrdom, was none other than the first Bishop of Rome. There is a considerable difference of opinion expressed by the early fathers and later theologians as to the exact period of the episcopate of Linus, so that no Roman or ecclesiastical source can be relied upon for this information.

THE LINK WITH BRITAIN.

But it will be noticed that the name of Linus is not mentioned in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. This proves that Linus was not Bishop at that time. His consecration could only have taken place, therefore, after the Epistle was written, and after St. Paul had visited Rome on one or another occasion. But the first time when St. Paul went to Rome he was a prisoner, living "in his own hired house." Either then, during his trial, or after he was released, he must have come into affectionate contact with the household of which Linus was a member. He thereupon found that Linus was a Briton, the son of Caractacus, the famous British general, who had been brought with his family as prisoners to Rome. Caractacus, owing to his splendid character and dignified appeal was released and pardoned by the Romans (Tacitus, *Annals*, xii. 33-37). Linus and Claudia were already Christians, having been converted in Britain by Joseph of Arimathæa. St. Paul converted Caractacus, and consecrated Linus as Bishop at about the same time. According to tradition (*Apost. Const.* vii. 46) Claudia was either the sister or mother of Linus—probably the former—and if her husband, Pudens, was the Aulus Pudens, the friend of Martial, we have the additional evidence given by the latter (Martial, *Epigrams*, iv. 13, xi. 53) that Claudia

was a British lady of high character and cultivation. Morgan (*St. Paul in Britain*, p. 151), quoting from one of the Greek Martyrologies, thinks that St. Paul had already consecrated Aristobulus as first Bishop of Britain.

We have an interesting and invaluable fact laid before us, then. "Pudens, Linus, and Claudia" (2 Tim. iv. 21)—and also "the household of Aristobulus" (Rom. xvi. 10)—were personal friends of St. Paul. But Caractacus, Linus, and Claudia belonged to the Royal Family (Silurian) of Britain. It was but natural, therefore, that St. Paul should take the first opportunity, when released from his Roman prison, of visiting Britain, and confirming the Christians there who had given to Rome its first Bishop!

A BRITISH-ISRAELITE CHURCH.

To recapitulate, we find that Rome was evangelised a few years after the Gospel was first planted in Britain by Joseph of Arimathæa, that its leading Christians were members of the Royal British Family, and therefore Israelites (hence Gentiles, from a Jewish point of view), and that its first Bishop was a British prince of the House of Israel. The early Roman Church was literally, by constitution and membership, a British-Israelite Church. This explains the difficulty that is unsolved in the minds of so many writers and commentators as to what was the constitution of the early Church of Rome. We know now, and we shall remember, that the Roman Church did not consist only of converted Jews (Acts xxviii. 17-24); neither did it merely consist of converted (heathen) Romans. It consisted of redeemed Israelites, the nucleus of whom were pure British, the remainder of whom were Israelites of the Old Testament dispersion, and amongst whom, of course, were many converted Jews.

St. Paul, therefore, wrote his magnificent Epistle to the Romans, addressing it, and sending it direct by the hand of Phœbe, to that portion of the redeemed House of Israel which was resident in the "Eternal City," the capital of the West, and at that time the metropolis of the world.

CHAPTER XX.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (II.).

THE Epistle to the Romans is the most doctrinal of all the letters that have come down to us from the pen of St. Paul, and it is at the same time the fullest and the most systematic of his writings. It may be described as a homily on the theme of "Justification by Faith." It deals with sin and salvation, with peace and holiness, with faith and obedience. It is therefore St. Paul's *magnum opus*. In this letter we see him at his greatest as a constructive thinker and theologian. For the purpose of systematic theology it is the most important book in the Bible. It has determined the course of Christian thought in its most fruitful epochs more than any other book in Holy Writ. Its texts and teaching have formed the battleground of some of the greatest and most momentous of conflicts in the history of the Church. Perhaps more than any other Epistle it has guided the evolution of Christian thought since the days of Martin Luther, teaching the liberty and the universality of the Gospel, and the blessedness of victory over sin.

ISRAELITES AND JEWS.

As we have seen, the Epistle was originally written for the Church at Rome, the majority of whose members were Israelite-Gentiles. The Jewish element was strong, as may be gathered from the Epistle, since St. Paul enters so deeply into the Jewish question, but it was nevertheless in the minority. Had the Jewish element been in the predominance amongst the Christian believers at Rome—in other words, had the Roman Church been a Hebrew offspring of Jerusalem

—it is difficult to understand how St. Paul could have claimed it as falling within his own province. On the other hand, there was a very extensive settlement of Jews in Rome at the dawn of the Christian era, so much so that Ovid speaks of the synagogues as being places of general resort (*Ars Amatoria* i. 76, written B.C. 2), while Juvenal, writing over a century later, complains that “the Orontes had flowed into the Tiber,” and ridicules his countrymen for having become Jews (*Sat.* xiv. 96).

As with the rest of the Epistles, the Roman letter was written in Greek, and not, of course, in Latin. In addition to this it is interesting to add that the language of the Roman Church continued to be Greek until the end of the second century, both as regards its worship and its literature.

ANALYSIS.

Excluding the Introduction (i. 1-15) and the Conclusion (xv. 14-xvi. 27), both of which are personal in character, the Epistle may be divided into two main sections, the doctrinal part (i. 16-xi.) and the practical part (xii.-xv. 13). Hence the analysis of the Epistle, briefly tabulated, is as follows:—

I.—INTRODUCTION (i. 1-15).

1. *The Salutation* (i. 1-7).

The writer, his gospel, his readers (*saints by calling*), his apostleship, his greeting.

2. *The Romans* (i. 8-15).

His thanksgiving for their faith, and his longing to see them, and to preach the Gospel at Rome.

II.—DOCTRINAL PART (i. 16-xi.).

1. *The Gospel the only panacea* (i. 16).

The sin of the heathen world (i. 16-32), the sin of the

Jewish world (ii. 1-iii. 8); therefore all (both Gentiles and Jews) have sinned (iii. 9-20)—the whole world guilty before God.

2. *The righteousness of God* (iii. 21-v. 21).

The fact of propitiation and redemption (iii. 21-26); faith greater than the law (iii. 27-31), illustrated by Abraham (before the law was given) and by David (iv.). Hence "justification by faith," the basis of life and hope (v. 1-11); the work of Christ contrasted with the failure of Adam (v. 12-21).

3. *The doctrine of the Christian life* (vi. 1-viii. 39).

The contrast between the Christian and the pre-Christian life; (a) life and death (vi. 1-14); (b) sin and righteousness (vi. 15-23); law and grace (vi. 14, vii. 1-6); (c) flesh and spirit (vii. 7-24).

The supreme victory through Christ (vii. 25) resulting in the spirit of sonship in Christ (viii. 1-17). The climax of the spiritual life found in glory and salvation (viii. 18-30), through the eternal love of Christ (viii. 31-39).

4. *Israel, the Jews and the Gospel* (ix.-xi.).

This section illustrates the "Theology of History." It may be thought that because the Jews rejected Christ, God's purposes had failed. But not so! The redemption of Israel proved the righteousness of God, apart from the failure of the law and the unbelief of the Jews, for the latter will be grafted again into the trunk of the olive tree of Israel when they obtain mercy through acknowledging the Cross.

St. Paul is distressed at the thought of Israel (Ephraim) having been cast off; but they are still the covenant people (ix. 1-5). He emphasises the calling of Ephraim-Israel (by promise) through Isaac (ix. 6-13), and therefore shows that prophecy (illustrated by quotations from Hosea and Isaiah) must be fulfilled in

the calling (and redemption) of Israel through the righteousness of God in Christ (ix. 14-29). But a branch of Israel (the Jews) have rejected Christ, and the kingdom of God is taken away from them (Matt. xxi. 43), since they clung to the law and not to faith (ix. 30-33).

But St. Paul still prays for the conversion of the Jews (here called Israel, in contradistinction to Ephraim-Israel, whom he calls "Gentiles"), and defines the difference between God's righteousness and Jewish righteousness (x. 1-10). In this way he shows that salvation awaits both the Jews and the heathen if they will accept the Gospel of Christ (x. 10-21), thus showing that there is no excuse for continuing to be rejected.

THE OLIVE TREE.

St. Paul explains that there is no room for misunderstanding. God did not cast away the House of Israel for good. They are the election, who are now redeemed, the Jews being "blinded." In fact, through the blindness of the Jews, Ephraim-Israel has become redeemed, and to them salvation is acceptable (xi. 1-12). But how glorious will the olive tree of Israel be when both Jews and heathen are grafted in (the Jews being the natural branches, broken off by rejection for the time being)! There is a twofold blindness from which Israel (twelve tribes) is suffering: (a) Birthright Israel has been blind to its redemption and identity, and (b) the Jews have become blind to the Gospel of Christ (xi. 13-25).

But the time will come when "all Israel" shall be saved, when the Jews shall "obtain mercy" through the faith of redeemed Israel, just as Israel has become redeemed through the fall of the Jews. In fact, both Israel and Judah have been "concluded in unbelief" that God may "have mercy upon all" (xi. 25-32).

The doctrinal part then closes with a rhapsody of praise and glory (xi. 33-36).

III.—PRACTICAL PART (xii.-xv. 13).

“ By their fruits ye shall know them.” The moral, practical and social conduct of redeemed Israel. The daily Christian life (xii.), the duties of Christian citizenship (xiii. 1-7); the Christian law of love and life (xiii. 8-14); consecrated fellowship and self-denial (xiv.); the example of Christ followed by the individual and by the nation (xv. 1-13).

IV.—CONCLUSION (xv. 14-xvi. 27).

St. Paul's earnestness and personal testimony (xv. 14-21); his proposition to visit Jerusalem, Rome, and Spain “ in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ ” (xv. 22-33); personal salutations (xvi. 1-16); warnings (xvi. 17-20), and final conclusion (xvi. 21-27).

Thus the Epistle terminates, as it begins, with the words “ obedience of faith ” (i. 5, xvi. 26), and is one of the most blessed of all the books of the Bible.

CHAPTER XXI.

CORINTH.

CORINTH was the capital of the Roman Province Achaia, and, with the exception of Athens, the centre of culture, it was the most important city in Greece in the days of the Roman Empire.

Its situation was unique. With Lat. 37 54N, and Long. 22 53E, Corinth occupied a strategic position at the south extremity of the narrow isthmus which separated the mainland of Greece from the Peloponnesus. But its greater importance was due to the fact that it held easy intercourse with the shores of the Aegean and of the Ionian Seas, through the Saronic Gulf to the west, and the Corinthian Gulf to the east. Corinth was, therefore, the commercial centre between Europe and Asia, and possessed a situation that made it of incalculable value to the spread of the Gospel in the early days of Christianity.

A MARITIME CITY.

The soil of Corinthia was anything but fertile; it was largely dependent upon its supplies coming from overseas. This tended all the more to make its inhabitants a maritime people. Euripides (*Troad*, 1087) describes Corinth as the "city of two seas," as it was entirely due to her position between the two great branches of the Mediterranean—the Adriatic and the Aegean—that she was enabled to build up her world-wide fame and celebrated colonies. Mythology assigns the construction of the great ship *Argo* to Corinth, while the first Greek triremes are said by Thucydides (*History of the*

Peloponnesian War, i. 13) to have been first built at Corinth. Neptune, the chief sea-divinity of the Romans, was her god.

Her population and wealth were further augmented by the manufactures in metallurgy, dyeing, and porcelain, which grew up in connection with the import and export of goods.

THE ISTHMUS.

The Isthmus was the most important part of the Corinthian territory. There was an artificial track from one side to the other, known as the Diolkos, across which it was customary to transport bodily small ships by means of rollers, thus saving much time and danger from the long voyage round the southern Cape Malea. Larger ships could not, of course, be hauled across, so their merchandise was transported instead. Strabo (*Geography*, VIII. vi. 20) speaks of the dangers of doubling Cape Malea "on account of the prevalence of contrary winds," and quotes the common proverb, "When you double Maleae, forget your home." This intensified the importance and the utility of the Isthmus, as the latter intensified the glory of Corinth. Nero attempted in vain to construct a canal from the one sea to the other, but his failure has been redeemed in modern times, as there is now, as is well known, a ship-canal, together with a railway, linking up ocean with ocean.

THE ISTHMIAN GAMES.

Another feature in connection with the fame of the Isthmus was the establishment of the Isthmian games. These were celebrated at a spot adjacent to the famous temple of Poseidon (Neptune). The games were organised every two years in honour of Neptune, and were to the Greeks rather a passion than an amusement. Yet St. Paul was greatly impressed by them, and frequently uses language drawn from their celebrations when he

wishes to enforce the zeal and the patience with which a Christian should strive after his heavenly reward (1 Cor. ix. 24-27; Rom. ix. 16; Gal. ii. 2, v. 7; Phil. ii. 16; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, cf. also Acts xx. 24, xiii. 25). The *prize* was a chaplet of fading leaves, which St. Paul contrasted with the unfading ("incorruptible") crown of the Christian's reward (1 Cor. ix. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 5, iv. 8, cf. also 1 Pet. v. 4). The leaves varied with the locality in which the Greek games were celebrated. At the Isthmus they were those of the indigenous pine; for a while parsley was substituted for the latter, but in St. Paul's day the pine-leaves were restored to use. The *training* which the athletes had to endure was very severe, and took place in the training-ground, or *gymnasium*. The latter was an important feature in every Greek city. The wonder is that the reward was so small and "fading" for so strenuous a training and struggle. "Yet," says St. Paul, "if bodily exercise profiteth so little in the long run, how much more severe should training unto godliness be, when the latter applies to life which now is, as well as to that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8; Phil. iv. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 19).

The word *gymnasium* is not found in the New Testament, but it occurs in the Apocrypha (1 Macc. i. 14; 2 Macc. iv. 9) referring to places of Greek amusement built at Jerusalem (cf. Heb. xii. 1, 2).

THE HISTORY OF CORINTH.

The history of Corinth dates from very early times; in fact, it was carried back by the inhabitants to the mythical ages. A Phœnician colony settled on the Acrocorinthus (a mass of rock rising 1,900 ft. high behind the city, not unlike the rock of Dumbarton) at a very early date, and introduced the worship of Aphrodite. The original population was that of the Æolic race, but the city was eventually conquered by the

Dorians, who became the dominant class. The earliest dynasty dates from the eleventh century. In 146 B.C. the city was destroyed by Mummius, and it remained in ruins (to the grief of Cicero, who termed it "the light of all Greece") until it was refounded by Julius Cæsar in 46 B.C., when it again flourished under the new title of *Colonia Julia Corinthus*. Its trade and commerce thereupon speedily revived for it to become the capital of Achaia and a great centre for the spread of the Gospel both eastwards and westwards. Its two ports were Lechæum on the west, and Cenchreæ on the east. From the latter port, it will be remembered, Phœbe carried St. Paul's letter to the Church at Rome.

ITS WEALTH AND LUXURY.

The city was always famous for its luxury and vice. Homer speaks of the wealth of Corinth (*Iliad*, ii. 570—'Αφνειὸν τε Κόρινθον), while Strabo says, "The temple of Venus at Corinth was so rich that it had more than a thousand women consecrated to the service of the goddess—courtesans, whom both men and women had dedicated as offerings to the goddess. The city was frequented by the multitudes who resorted thither. . . . Masters of ships freely squandered all their money, hence the proverb, 'It is not in every man's power to go to Corinth,' a proverb also Latinized by Horace: 'Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum' " (*Ep.* I. 17, 36).

The population of Corinth in St. Paul's day was a cosmopolitan one. There would be descendants of the Roman colonists of 46 B.C.; a large number of Roman officials and business men, with their families and entourage; a very considerable Greek population; a strong Jewish element, with its own synagogue (*Acts* xviii. 4, 7, 8); and a number of Gentiles, other than heathen Greeks and Romans, whom we believe to have

been Israelites of the early dispersions, and who, receiving the Gospel of redemption, became the nucleus of the Corinthian Church.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH.

St. Paul stayed eighteen months at Corinth during the progress of his Second Missionary Journey, when he became acquainted with Aquilla and Priscilla, with whom he lodged. The city was also visited by Apollos, who came from Ephesus (Acts xviii. 24, 27; 1 Cor. i. 12). Together they preached amongst the Jews and the Gentiles, the former of whom having been driven from Rome by the decree of Claudius. Perhaps St. Paul visited Corinth again from Ephesus (Acts xix. 21), and probably once more on his Third Missionary Journey, when he stayed three months in Greece (Acts xx. 3).

The founding of the Corinthian Church was a very important event. It was the outcome of a special revelation which St. Paul had (Acts xviii. 9, 10); and while he was the pioneer Apostle in the sowing of the seed, Silas and Timothy assisted him, as did Apollos, who followed up their teaching (Acts xviii. 5; 1 Cor. i. 12, ii. 4-6), God giving the increase. So anxious was St. Paul about the Christians in Corinth that he wrote at least three letters to their Church. The first of these Epistles is lost (1 Cor. v. 9), but those which we call the First and Second Epistles are more correctly the second and the third which the Apostle wrote. Christianity grew very quickly in Corinth, and rapidly spread from sea to sea. But the early Christians were soon disturbed by the spirit of dissension, and their Church showed signs of being corrupted by luxury and vice, the two greatest evils of the day. Furthermore, St. Paul's own Apostleship was challenged in comparison with that of St. Peter, and his oratory was invidiously

compared with the eloquence of Apollos. These were matters which engaged very seriously the attention of St. Paul, since they formed the reasons for his writing to the Christians at Corinth.

As we shall see, these wonderful Epistles throw great light upon the state of the early Church, itself influenced by the history, situation, and licentiousness of the famous city. They deal with the human conscience, and are the first Epistles to touch upon Christian ethics. They lift the Christian above his environment, and exalt "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," the Holy One of Israel.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

THE Epistles to the Corinthians give us a clear insight into the character of St. Paul. In fact, the personality of the Apostle stands out more emphatically in the Corinthian letters than in any other of his Epistles. They reveal St. Paul's deep love for God and man, his passion for souls, and his unfailing fidelity to the Cross of Christ. There are in these Epistles characteristics peculiarly personal and individual in tone; in fact, a large portion of the first Epistle is occupied with personal matters. The first four chapters deal with the divisions in the Corinthian Church, these particular troubles being caused by those who, as we have seen, criticised his speech and Apostleship.

THE EVANGELICAL EPISTLES.

The Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians are known as the Four Evangelical Epistles, because their key-note is the *Cross of Christ*. The Thessalonian letters deal largely with the Second Coming of Christ, while the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians—and also the letter to Philemon—which are known as the *prison Epistles*, are concerned (particularly the Ephesians and the Colossians) with the Christology of “the Church, which is His body.” To the Corinthian Epistles, therefore, we must turn for “the word of the Cross,” preached through “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

In spite of those besetting sins and temptations that harassed the Christians at Corinth, St. Paul thanks

God for the rich spiritual endowment of their Church. Confidently he declares that God will perfect the work of grace in them. He reminds them, as he also reminded the Christians at Rome, that they are "called saints"; that is, "saints by calling," according to the literal meaning of the Greek. They belong to the House of Israel, the chosen people of God, once cast off, but always God's elect, chosen, and called, and now, through the redemption, to be regarded as "sanctified in Christ Jesus," and therefore "saints by calling." To them the Cross is Divine wisdom, even though it be nought but foolishness to the philosophers of this world. Hence the first Epistle reveals the doctrine of the Cross in application. It upholds first life, and then the philosophy of life, as the Gospel method. This is the only way in which the Christian Faith can confute the ethical problems and violent conflicts, such as those which presented themselves at Corinth, and which are the enemies of Christianity in the world to-day (i.).

THE WISDOM OF GOD.

St. Paul then passes to a consideration of the weakness of human wisdom in comparison with the strength of Divine spirituality. There is always the battle between the human and the Divine, between the carnal and the spiritual; but only he who is spiritually discerned can understand "the deep things of God." He shows that the spiritual man must transcend both the natural and the carnal man, and that the only foundation upon which the spiritual temple of humanity can be built is Jesus Christ, who was once crucified, but who is now risen. He then teaches that redeemed Israel becomes the temple (sanctuary) of God, through the indwelling Spirit of God (ii., iii.).

St. Paul now adds a highly important word regarding the faithfulness of Christian stewardship, and the validity of his own Apostleship (iv.). This gives him

an unchallenged authority with which to deal with certain deadly sins that showed signs of corrupting the Corinthian Church (v., vi., 12-20), wherein he gives his Apostolic commands about legal matters, forbidding the Christians to use heathen courts of justice (vi. 1-11). In this connection he draws the line between expediency and necessity—particularly regarding marriage and slavery (vii.).

SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

Another thorny subject, touching the social life of the Church in various ways, occupied the mind of the Apostle, and that was concerning *meats offered to idols* (viii.-x.). The only solution to this vexed question was through love rather than knowledge, illustrated by his own example—intimating that in theory he was for freedom, but in practice for self-denying strictness. But he warns the Corinthians against idolatrous feasts by (a) the history of ancient Israel, their forefathers (x. 1-14), and (b) the sacredness of the Lord's Supper (x. 15-22).

After dealing with other *disorders in public worship* (xi. 2-34), in which he lays great stress upon the reverence due from women at times of Divine Worship, and quotes the words of our Saviour at the Institution of the Lord's Supper, he passes to the subject of *spiritual gifts* (xii.-xiv.).

THE ETERNITY OF LOVE.

This section is a very important one, dealing as it does with the manifold working of the Holy Spirit. The illustration of the body is taken to show that although there is one body, yet each body has several members, all working together in perfect harmony and concord. So in the Church, which is "the body of Christ," there are diversities of spiritual gifts—"first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers"; yet

all operating through " the one and the selfsame Spirit." But great as are the functions of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge, greater are the sweet influences of love. What literature can exceed for its eloquent beauty the magnificence of St. Paul's panegyric on love which " never faileth " (xiii.)? Far-reaching is faith; far-seeing is hope—but *love conquers all*. And so we cling to those immortal words :—

" And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ;
But greater than these is love."

Passing thence from the excellencies of love, St. Paul teaches that the gift of prophecy is greater than the gift of tongues, and therein he issues regulations regarding " decency and order " in the worship of God.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION.

But we now turn from the personal to the particular in order to study the greatest doctrine and dogma of all time. It is the only section of the Epistle which is essentially doctrinal, and the Church throughout all ages must ever be indebted to St. Paul for the lucidity and emphasis with which he deals with the doctrine of the resurrection (xv.). He knows it to be an established fact, for he, with others, had himself seen the risen Lord (xv. 1-8). The resurrection of Christ, therefore, becomes the foundation of all Christianity (12-19). If Christ be not risen, then everything goes by the board, including faith, forgiveness of sins, and even life itself.

The resurrection of Christ occupies the foremost place in the scheme of redemption (xv. 20-28). It is the pledge of the victory of God's Kingdom, and the guarantee of Christian hope in Christ, " that God may be all in all." Christian experience proves that the resurrection is not only the basis of those who suffer for Christ's sake, but also an incentive against a relaxation

of morals. It is a continual appeal to the human conscience to awaken to righteousness, and not to commit sin (29-34).

But the resurrection is not only a dogma of the Christian Faith, it is also the principle of nature (xv. 35-53). "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body," and the spiritual must claim the ascendancy over the natural in the translation of corruption into incorruption. This is the law of God's Kingdom, resulting in death losing its sting, just as Israel, once "dead in trespasses and sins," has found victory in redemption "through our Lord Jesus Christ," who died and rose again that Israel might live.

CONCLUSION.

The last chapter is once again a personal one, enforcing the principle of "Sunday alms-giving"; it appeals to the Christians to "stand fast in the faith," and closes with an exhortation for more love, both for the Lord Jesus Christ, and for one another. Nor need we be surprised at the Apostle's constant injunction on behalf of Christian love and charity, since love pours from his very being, as light emanates from the sun:—

My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

THE Second Epistle to the Corinthians is, as in the case of its famous predecessor, very largely a personal one. St. Paul wrote the First Corinthian letter from Ephesus, and shortly afterwards left for Troas. Here he fully expected to meet Titus, whom he had sent to Corinth, and to learn from him information about the Church in that city, and to receive news of the effects of his former Epistle (2 Cor. ii. 12). But not finding Titus there, he crossed over to Macedonia, where he was "comforted" by the arrival of Titus, who brought good tidings from Corinth, telling St. Paul of the godly sorrow and repentance which his letter had produced, and of the practical regard for the discipline of the Church, which it had restored (vii. 5-16).

St. Paul was greatly stirred by the report of Titus, which evoked in him strong and mingled emotions. No small amount of anxiety was still disturbing him through the depreciation of his Apostolic authority; in fact, the false teachers were using his former letter to bring new charges against him, as having failed to keep his promise of coming to see them, and having adopted an authoritative style of writing, which, as they alleged, had but little in common with what they regarded as the contemptibleness of his person and speech.

ITS PURPOSE.

St. Paul, therefore, wrote this Second Epistle to encourage and back up the work of the reformation, to establish more firmly his Apostolic authority, and to

prepare the Corinthian Christians for his intended visit, when he would look forward to finding these troubles rectified and their offerings ready for their poorer brethren (viii. 18, ix. 3, 5, x. 2, 11, xiii. 1, 2, 10).

This Epistle differs considerably from the First, both in tone and contents, but it shares with the latter a remarkable insight into St. Paul's sound common-sense and consistency of Christian character. The First is objective and practical; the Second strongly subjective and personal. The First is calm and measured in tone, and even severe, although collected and deliberate; the Second is broken, vehement, and impassioned: Beethoven has almost translated it into music in his wonderful *Sonate Pathétique*, which more than any other famous composition seems to reflect the spirit—now gentle, now caustic, now melodious, now fiery—of the Second Corinthian Epistle.

THE CHARM OF THE APOSTLE.

In the Second Epistle we see the spiritual side of the Apostle. He treats his children in the faith more with the affection of a lover than with the regard of a pastor. He tells of unparalleled hardships endured, and of enmities softened, with the same breath in which he speaks of "visions and revelations of the Lord." If he has a continual sense of things which are eternal, he never forgets his own sincerity and self-abnegation—his physical and spiritual devotion to the timeless Cross. This Epistle is a portrait of the Apostle painted by himself. No other letter shows such a character study of St. Paul's very soul, his true manliness. If the Epistle to the Romans shows us that the author is a theologian; if the Epistle to the Philippians reveals the saintliness of the Apostle, it is to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians that we must turn if we would gaze into the force and fire of his nature, the absolute

ascendancy of his genius, the personal charm of his manner and disposition. He is, in fact, a second Nathaniel—"an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile"!

ANALYSIS.

It consists of three distinct sections, the first and the third being apologies (in fact, the whole Epistle is St. Paul's *apologia pro vita sua*), and the second a homily on the collection for the poorer saints at Jerusalem:—

1. *The Defence of his ministry* (i.-vii.).

(a) Salutation, and thanksgiving for Divine comfort, and a reference to dangers passed through (i. 1-11); (b) The defence of his conduct in recent occurrences (i. 12—ii. 17); (c) The general character and spirit of his ministry (iii.-vi.), showing his attitude towards the old covenant of Divine origin, the frailty of its earthly instrument, its relation to eternal things (v. 1-13), its message of national (Israelitish) and individual reconciliation (v. 14—vi. 2); (d) An appeal to the Corinthians for reciprocal affection (vi. 11-13, vii. 2, 3). The passage (vi. 14—vii. 1) is thought by some commentators to be a portion of the lost letter (1 Cor. v. 9), as it hardly fits into its present context; (e) The impression made by the tidings of Titus (vii. 2-16).

2. *The Homily on the collection* (viii., ix.).

These beautiful chapters deal with the Christian duty of almsgiving, illustrated by the example of Christ (viii. 9) and the abounding grace of God (ix. 8).

3. *The vindication of himself against his Corinthian adversaries* (x.-xiii.).

These chapters are deeply personal, in which St. Paul asserts his Apostolic authority—to the glory of God (x.). He denounces his slanderers and exposes their misunderstandings (xi. 1-15, xii. 14-21). He

refers again to his sufferings for Christ's sake (xi. 16-33), and even glories more in his infirmities than in his revelations (xii.). The conclusion (xiii.) marks the calm that follows the storm, breathing thoughts of peace, love, and kindness, and closes with the "Grace" or Apostolic benediction, which, though so familiar to our prayers and devotions, occurs here for the first time (xiii. 14).

AN AMBASSADOR PEOPLE.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians will prove of deeply instructive value to students of British-Israelism. Apart from the fact that it was especially addressed to a Church whose nucleus of believers were redeemed Israelites, it will appeal to modern Israelites because of its bearing upon the revival of Israel through the teaching of the Cross. It throws into bold relief the reconciliation which has taken place between Israel and God, between a people who were once cast off, but who are now brought nigh by the blood of Christ.

We have, therefore, become an ambassador people, whose duty it is to proclaim the good tidings of reconciliation to all people. No longer does sin stand between Israel and God (Isa. xliii. 25); no longer, therefore, must Israel allow sin to hinder the progress of the human race, "for the love of Christ constraineth us." The British and American peoples, who know the love of God in Christ, and who know of the efficacy of the Cross, must see to it that they "are ambassadors for Christ," whose duty it is to expand Israel's kingdom all over the world, and to stand for and uphold those Divine truths, which are the attributes of Israel's King, Whose ambassadors they are, and Whose "witnesses" they must ever be.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THIS Epistle is addressed by St. Paul to "the Churches of Galatia" (i. 2), a district which is mentioned several times in the New Testament (Acts xvi. 6, xviii. 23; 1 Cor. xvi. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1, and with a various reading *Gaul* in 2 Tim. iv. 10).

GALATIA.

It was always thought until recent times that "the region of Galatia and Phrygia," which was evangelised by St. Paul, was that portion of Asia Minor in the north which was occupied by the Celtic-Gauls about 280 B.C., being subdued by the Romans under Manlius 189 B.C., and subsequently incorporated into the Roman Province of Galatia in 25 B.C.

This is what is known as "the North Galatian theory," and it has been supported by such great scholars as Lightfoot and Salmon. The difficulties in favour of this view, however, are that the chief cities of this district, *i.e.*, Tavium, Pessinus, and Ancyra, are nowhere mentioned in the Bible, neither is there any record in the Acts of the Apostles of St. Paul having actually visited this district on his missionary journeys. Further, the visit of St. Paul to the geographical Galatia would have involved a very long detour, northwards and eastwards, and it is almost incredible that St. Luke would have summed up such a lengthy journey (if it ever occurred) in so few words as those in which he alludes to the district (Acts xvi. 6).

THE SOUTH GALATIAN THEORY.

But within recent years an entirely new light has been thrown upon St. Paul's missionary work, for

Professor Ramsay, with brilliant advocacy, has introduced a new interpretation, called "the South Galatian theory," which is now widely accepted. He has himself contended that Bishop Lightfoot would undoubtedly have accepted this opinion, had he the knowledge and research which these later years have produced. Professor Ramsay has devoted his life to the task of studying on the spot the actual localities visited by St. Paul, and has embodied the results of his research in the famous books, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, and *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, which may be strongly recommended to all New Testament students. He teaches that the Galatia of St. Paul's missionary labours is a term which is to be understood *politically* and not *geographically*, as the Roman Province of Galatia extended from Pontus in the north to the Taurus mountains in the south. It thus embraced the original Galatia (in its narrower sense), Phrygia Galatica, and Lycaonia Galatica. When St. Paul writes, therefore, he writes invariably as a Roman citizen, and as such he regards the inhabitants of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts xiii. 14—xiv. 24), *i.e.*, the Churches which he founded on his First Missionary Journey, as "the Churches of Galatia," to whom he wrote this Epistle. He again visited these Churches both on his Second and Third Missionary Journeys (Acts xvi. 1-6, xviii. 23). This view of the Galatian question fits in with the narrative of the Acts, and leaves no important city unevangelised; furthermore, it confirms St. Paul's policy of founding Churches along the great lines of communication throughout the extent of the Roman Empire.

THE CELTIC TEMPERAMENT.

It is evident from a study of the Epistle that the Galatian Christians possessed what we may call a "Celtic temperament." They were fond of extremes,

and possessed a fickleness which prevented them from enjoying that stability of character which St. Paul desired to be the lot of his children in the faith. One moment they received the Apostle as an angel, the next they would have plucked out their own eyes and have given them to him (iv. 14). At first they acclaimed St. Paul and his Gospel; then they were "soon removed . . . unto another gospel" (i. 6).

No wonder, therefore, that this is the only Epistle of St. Paul's which opens without any words of praise, congratulations, or thanksgivings! Rather does the Apostle give expression to a feeling of indignation because of their revolt from God, owing to the disloyal persuasions of those who feign would have enticed and "bewitched" them with the fascination of another gospel, which, after all, is "not another," for there is only one gospel, the Gospel of the Cross of Christ (i. 6, 7, iii. 1).

A BEAUTIFUL EPISTLE.

Yet this Epistle is one of the most powerful of all. If it breathes a spirit of vehement indignation and biting irony, it is, nevertheless, full of tender affection and uplifting spirituality. It contains lofty ideals, and brings the Christian life into absolute subjection to Christ (ii. 20). It upholds the weakness of the law, and the transcending influence of faith (ii. 16-19, iii.). It condemns the principle of Judaizing just as strongly as it counteracts the sinuous evils of false teachers (ii. 11-15, i. 8). It proclaims the victory of the spirit over the flesh (v. 16-25), and urges that holiness of heart and life is secured under the Gospel by the absolute authority of "the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ" (vi. 14), without whom "the Israel of God" can have neither "peace nor mercy" (vi. 16).

THE IDENTITY OF THE GALATIANS.

The question now naturally arises, "Who were the Galatian Christians?" That they were Israelites of an old-time dispersion is beyond doubt, because, as we have seen before, St. Paul wrote his Epistles to redeemed Israel. But the name "Galatia" carries with it a deeper significance than that which is associated with the names of other Epistles, for it recalls the three names by which the inhabitants of Europe (to the west of the Rhine) were known to the classical writers of antiquity, *i.e.*, *Celtae*, *Galatae*, and *Galli*. The name *Celtae* is the most ancient, being first found in the earliest Greek historians, Hecataeus (*Fragm.* 19, 21, 22) and Herodotus (ii. 33, iv. 39). The term *Galatae* first occurs in Timæus (third century B.C., *Fragm.* 37), while *Galli* is the name by which the Romans recognised these tribes.

CYMRIC CELTS.

There were three languages spoken in the Roman Province of Galatia in St. Paul's time. Celtic was the language of the Gallic inhabitants; Greek was the language of culture, education, and Christianity; while Latin was the official tongue, as the province was Roman. Jerome (*Commentarii in Epistolam ad Galatas*) tells us that in his day (at the close of the fourth Christian century) Celtic was still spoken in Galatia. He further says that the *Galatae* were so called because of the whiteness of their complexion (*γάλα, milk*), described by Virgil (*Aen.* viii. 660), *Tum lactea colla auro innectuntur*. Lightfoot (*Epistle to the Galatians*, see pp. 1-17, 246-251), after showing the Celtic origin of many Galatian names quoted from classical sources, says, "There is, then, every reason for believing that the Galatian settlers were genuine Celts, and of the two main sub-divisions into which modern philologists have

divided the Celtic race, they seem rather to have belonged to the Cymric, of which the Welsh are the living representatives. Thus, in the age when St. Paul preached, a native of Galatia spoke a language essentially the same with that which was current in the southern part of Britain. And if—to indulge a passing fancy—we picture to ourselves one of his Asiatic converts visiting the Far West to barter the hair cloths of his country for the useful metal which was the special product of this island, we can imagine that, finding a medium of communication in a common language, he may have sown the first seeds of the Gospel, and laid the foundations of the earliest Church in Britain.” May we not go one step farther than Lightfoot, and say that it was St. Paul who, coming into contact with the Celtic inhabitants of Galatia, and the British prisoners at Rome, himself decided to come to Britain and preach the Gospel here?

ISRAEL’S LIBERTY.

This, then, is the colouring which gives tone to the Epistle to the Galatians. The letter was written to Cymric-Celts of the stock of Israel, and so is peculiarly associated with the origins and history, not only of our Christian faith, but also of our race. To us, then, it brings a special message. It beseeches us to cling to “the old, old story,” and to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” a liberty for which spiritually and nationally our race has for ever asserted itself in the building up of its Christian Empire. It forbids us to turn again to “the weak and beggarly elements” of legal bondage, and it holds out to all Christian people the glory of the Spirit-filled life, whose fruit is collectively (for you cannot have love without joy, and joy without peace, etc.) those inward and spiritual blessings which hallow a consecrated personality or exalt a righteous nation.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

THE Epistle to the Ephesians belongs to what is called the Prison Group of Epistles, as do the Epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians and Philemon.

It does not require much observation to notice that the Ephesians and the Colossians have a great deal of similarity between them. Their doctrine is that of *Christ and the Church*, as the doctrine of the previous Epistles was that of *Christ and the Cross*.

They are known as the Prison Epistles because St. Paul wrote them when he was a prisoner at Rome. As we read them we can hear the clank of the Apostle's chains; we can breathe the consecrated atmosphere of "his own hired house" (Acts xxviii. 30); and we can sense that deep and refined devotion which characterised his prison life in the quietude of his own soul, away from the rushing turmoil of transit and travel.

A CIRCULAR LETTER.

This Epistle always bears the above title, but it is uncertain if St. Paul actually addressed it to the Ephesian Christians. Two of the ancient MSS., the Vatican and the Sinaitic, carrying much authority, omit the words "at Ephesus" (i. 1), and many have thought that this letter may be "the Epistle from Laodicea" (Col. iv. 16). It is more probable—and this view is now generally accepted—that St. Paul intended the Epistle to be a circular letter written to the churches of Asia Minor, sent on from one church to another, with a blank in

the address to be filled up (by Tychicus) according to its immediate destination. Evidence of this is seen by the absence of any local and personal allusions, and by the general character of its contents.

EPHESUS.

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It was a large and ancient city, situated about three miles from the sea, in the district of Ionia. It was always famous from earliest times for the worship of Diana (Acts xix. 34), to whom was erected the largest of all the Greek temples, capable of holding, as has been calculated, some 24,000 people. It was 425 feet in length and 220 in width, and was adorned with 127 columns, each 60 ft. high. It was of extreme magnificence, enriched with immense treasures, and was regarded as one of the wonders of the world (Acts xix. 27). The real name of Diana was Artemis, and a great trade was carried on in connection with her worship. It was the custom to make silver shrines (representing Artemis on her shrine) for the rich, as did Demetrius (Acts xix. 24-26), and terra-cotta or marble shrines for the poor, a trade which brought great profit to the "craftsmen" owing to the popularity of the goddess.

Ephesus was also famous for its being on the main route from Rome to the East, with many side roads and sea routes converging at it (Acts xix. 21, xx. 1, 17; 1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 12). It was therefore a splendid centre for the Gospel, and held great attractions for St. Paul, who went there at least twice, on the second occasion staying nearly three years (Acts xviii. 18, 19, xix.), his labours being crowned with signal success. A little later, when on his way from Macedonia to Jerusalem, being unable to spare time to revisit Ephesus, he invited the elders of the Ephesian Church to meet him at Miletus, when he gave them a most beautiful and farewell address (Acts xx. 17-38).

CHRIST IN GOD.

The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians are homilies on the words of our Lord (John xiv. 20)—“ I am in My Father (Ephesians), and ye in Me (Philippians), and I in you (Colossians).” This Epistle therefore teaches the glory of Christ in God, resulting in the perfecting of the Church “ for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Its Christology reaches to the highest plane conceivable, and lifts the Christian believer to the ecstatic level of being “ filled into all the fulness of God ” (iii. 19)—“ the fulness of Him that filleth all in all ” (i. 23). The two outstanding causes of this hope are (a) the greatness of the power which God wrought in raising Christ from the dead, and (b) the love of Christ, which exceeds all dimensions, and “ passeth knowledge ” (i. 15-23, iii. 17-21). These factors are the secret of Israel’s redemption, and of the Christian’s hope—the glorious power of God, and the wonderful love of Christ.

It is the Epistle which expounds the riches of God’s goodness (Rom. ii. 4). They are “ the unsearchable riches of Christ,” which are revealed as “ the riches of His grace ” (i. 7) *through the Cross*, and “ the riches of His glory ” (i. 18, iii. 16) *through the Holy Spirit*. Thus God’s riches in Christ are our inheritance through Calvary and Pentecost, *first the Cross and then the Crown*. Grace is only obtained through the shedding of His precious blood, and glory is only revealed through the indwelling Spirit.

GRACE AND GLORY.

But this Epistle is also famous for its revelation of the working of *grace* and *glory* in the Christian heart. It tells of (a) the glory of His grace (i. 6), the riches of His grace (i. 7, ii. 7), the salvation of grace (ii. 5, 8), the stewardship of grace (iii. 2), the gift of grace

(iii. 8), the results of grace (iii. 9); and (b) the praise of the glory of His grace (i. 6), the praise of His glory (i. 12, 14), the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (i. 18), the riches of His glory (iii. 16), the tribulations of glory (iii. 13), the glory in the Church (iii. 21).

THE UNITY OF THE FAITH.

Building upon the foundation of grace and glory, St. Paul then gives one of the most magnificent exhortations in Holy Scripture on the subject of the unity of the Christian faith (iv.). He bases it on "the unity of the Spirit," and proclaims the sevenfold constitution of "the Church, which is His body." It consists of the one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. This ideal unity is represented by "an holy temple in the Lord" (ii. 19, 22), which consists of the citizenship, or commonwealth, of redeemed Israel, "the household of God," which is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone" (ii.). The consequent result is that Israel has to develop "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL.

But, it may be asked, how can this unity in Israel come to pass when Israel had so long been riven in twain, and when the world in our day, as in St. Paul's day, is in such a state of chaos and upheaval? The answer is that St. Paul sees into "the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (iii. 11). He looks backward and forward, retrospectively and prospectively. He visualises the Old Covenant promises, and sees that Israel must be united, and thereby become a blessing to all the world. If they had been "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel"

St. Paul sees that they are to be no longer "without Christ . . . having no hope, and without God in the world." Henceforth through the preaching of the Cross they are to be "made nigh by the blood of Christ," the middle wall of partition being broken down in reconciliation.

This is the mystery, which was only made known to St. Paul by special revelation. To many people to-day it is still a mystery, and ever will be, until through the removing of the veil from their eyes they are willing to understand *the whole counsel of God*.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

There can then be no "unity of the faith" until the mystery of redeemed and reunited Israel be understood by all the members of the body of Christ. The building of the temple is still under process of construction, but it has not yet been fitly framed together, for enmity and the evil passions of human nature are not yet wholly slain. Not that the atoning sacrifice of Christ lacked efficacy, but that Israel has not yet given a consecrated response to the claims of the Cross. St. Paul therefore compares Israel as Gentiles (because they were no longer under the Hebrew law, since they had been cast away and were "far off") with "other Gentiles" (iv. 17), *i.e.*, the heathen nations, and thereby outlines the distinction between God's chosen people and the rest of mankind. God's elect have to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (iv. 24). They have to set an example to the world; they have to lead the nations to God; they have to live the Christ-like life (v. 1, 2); they have to prove the Church to be "holy and without blemish" (v. 27).

The Epistle to the Ephesians upholds the lofty ideal which the Lord lays before His people, to the standard

of which they have to attain. It provides a personal and social, a domestic and national, a moral and spiritual ideal—a triumphant life, a sanctified Church. If the building of the temple can only come to pass through Christian warfare, then it must not be forgotten that in this life the Church is a militant one, and so “ the whole armour of God ” is provided. Nor must we forget, as Bunyan said, that “ the Christian has no armour for his back.”

GOD IS ABLE.

Thus closes one of the most blessed and illuminating books of the Bible. It co-ordinates a call to national righteousness with a command to personal holiness; it conveys a charge “ to comprehend with all saints ” the boundless revelation of the love of Christ in God; and it carries a timeless ascription of praise and glory unto Him that is able to do, “ according to the power that worketh in us,” what we think, what we ask or think, all that we ask or think, above all that we ask or think, abundantly above all that we ask or think, and even *exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.*

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE Epistle to the Philippians, although placed between the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, is generally considered to have been written after them, although certainty cannot be attached to this decision. The latter is built upon the hypothesis that the Epistle seems to suggest a longer duration of imprisonment than do the other letters of the Prison Group.

The Philippian letter stands a little apart from its compeers of the Roman captivity. It bears points of resemblance to members of the other Pauline groups, as well as to those of its own. In simplicity and warmth of tone, it is mindful of 1 Thessalonians. It is certainly suggestive of the teaching in the Romans and Galatians, as, for example, when St. Paul once again refers to his own ministry, and warns his readers against false teachers (iii. 1-10). While foreseeing his own death (i. 23, ii. 16, 17), the Apostle seems to anticipate his charge to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 5-8). But the general colouring of the Epistle is that of the Prison Group. It breathes the same deeply spiritual atmosphere; it lacks all controversial argument; it glories in Christian joy, and shows how St. Paul regards his past sufferings and present imprisonment as turning out "rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel" (i. 12-17).

PHILIPPI.

The city of Philippi was situated near the eastern frontier of Macedonia, and about ten miles from the

Aegean coast-line. Its original name was Crenides, but it was renamed after himself by Philip of Macedon, who seized the adjacent gold-mines (for which the district was famous), and made the town into a border fortress. It was celebrated in later days in consequence of the victory which Octavian and Antony gained over Brutus and Cassius on the plain south of the town in B.C. 42, having been incorporated into the Roman Empire with the rest of Macedonia previously in B.C. 168. In B.C. 146 Macedonia became a Roman Province.

Philippi lay on the great eastern road of the Roman Empire, and therefore was regarded by St. Paul as being so important that it was the first place in Europe where the Apostle preached the Gospel. Here he planted a Church on his Second Missionary Journey, and as the city had become a Roman colony (since B.C. 42), it was the first essentially Roman town in which St. Paul preached. As we have seen above, it is probable that St. Luke was a Macedonian; in fact, we find him to be closely associated with Philippi (Acts xvi. 9-13, xvii. 1, xx. 6), and it is more than likely that, as a Christian physician, he practised in that city. Some think that St. Paul left St. Luke in charge of the Philippian Church. It is noticeable that Philippi contained a ministry of Christian women (Lydia, Acts xvi. 14-16, Euodias, Syntyche, and others, Phil. iv. 2, 3), while it is St. Luke who gives us "the gospel of womanhood."

LYDIA.

There was no synagogue at Philippi, and so according to the general custom it was the habit of the Jews to assemble outside the city by the edge of the river, "where prayer was wont to be made." In this way St. Paul came into contact with the wealthy Lydia, who at once placed herself and her substance at the disposal of the Apostle. It is not impossible that as she came



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REV. G. H. LANCASTER.

THE GREAT MOSQUE EL-AZHAR.
(THE UNIVERSITY OF CAIRO).

from Thyatira, in Lydia, the latter was not her proper name. She may have been known in Philippi as "the Lydian," and consequently she may be identified with Euodias or Syntyche, for it seems strange that St. Paul does not otherwise mention by name so important and wealthy a convert when writing to the Philippian Church, unless, of course, she had left the city before the date at which the Epistle was written.

Of all the Churches which St. Paul founded, it is probable that not one of them was held in greater affection by the Apostle than the Church at Philippi. On more than one occasion the Philippian Christians had the privilege of ministering to his needs (iv. 10-19), a fact which drew from the inspired heart of the Apostle that beautiful verse (iv. 19) which has proved of untold comfort, blessing, and consolation to tens of thousands of Christians during the past nineteen centuries.

A LOVE LETTER.

The Epistle to the Philippians has for its key-note the fact of Christian joy. The words *joy* or *rejoice* occur some eighteen times in its four short chapters, and likewise there are numerous expressions showing the Apostle's tender love and longing for his Philippian flock. Thrice he calls them "beloved." He thanks God upon every remembrance of them; he prays for them with the earnestness of prayer that overflows with abounding love (i. 9-11). Seven times in the first chapter alone does he refer to the Gospel which had wrought such joyous blessing in their hearts "from the first day until now." Surely no ministerial shepherd ever loved his flock as St. Paul loved his Philippian sheep! They were dearest to him of all his children in the faith. Never was there a rift in the lute. No discord ever disappointed his faith in their faith. He

rejoiced because they rejoiced; they rejoiced because he rejoiced. His letter to them is therefore a love-letter, written in terms of deepest affection and sincerity.

SOME SALIENT POINTS.

Humility is one of the essentials of Christian character, and so lowliness of mind and the esteeming of others better than self serve to bring out the doctrine of the self-emptying of Christ (ii. 1-11). The ship that is the most laden floats lowest in the water; the branch of the vine that is the most weighted with fruit bends nearest the ground, *and the most grown Christian is the humblest*. This introduces the Godhead of Christ and the glory of His Manhood, and so, in keeping with the thought of Christian humility, reveals the doctrine of the Incarnation in that which is one of the most famous passages of St. Paul's Christology.

THE HEAVENLY PRIZE.

Observe also what may be termed the "profit and loss account of the Gospel" (iii. 7-14). This beautiful Epistle, which radiates love and joy from every portion of it, and which has for its motto the words, "To me to live is Christ," insists upon the attainment of "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is a spiritual reward which transcends all earthly gain; in fact, the very things which are humanly speaking profitable are from a spiritual point of view a loss. The ideal consummation of the Christian's progress in life is found in "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." Any human loss or suffering which makes the attainment of that ideal the more practicable is a spiritual gain. In fact, that knowledge of Christ "and the power of His resurrection" can only be apprehended through our being identified with Christ in His death

and resurrection. He alone is the hope of the Christian heart; He alone is the goal of the soul's ambition. All else is but loss if Christ draw not nearer day by day.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Then we are reminded of some of the graces of the Christian life which kindle that joy in the Lord, which gives stability of character to those who know that "the Lord is at hand."

These are: peace of mind (iv. 7), purity of thought (8), contentment of heart (11, 12), achievement of purpose (13), and satisfaction of needs (19), which, on the foundation of "prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," build up the believer in his "most holy faith" in Christ.

Thus does the Epistle to the Philippians go down to the bed-rock of human experience, and prove that there is no life worth living other than the life which rejoices in the fulness of Christ and in that "peace of God which passeth all understanding." The Philippians alone among all the Churches established by St. Paul seem to have attained consistently to this Christian joy. They have bequeathed to us a great heritage, and through the ages they would remind us of the words of Christ: "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (St. John xv. 11).

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE Epistle to the Colossians is, as already mentioned above, a member of the Prison Group of Epistles, which were written by St. Paul when he was a prisoner for the first time in the city of Rome.

It bears a remarkable resemblance to the Epistle to the Ephesians, with which it has an undeniable kinship, both in colour-tone, in doctrine, and in Christology. If the Ephesians is the most diffuse and flowing of the Apostle's writings, the Colossian Letter has a style which is vigorous, and often highly elliptical and abrupt. In the former Epistle his soul is at rest, while in the latter we feel that St. Paul is in spiritual conflict. The motto of the Epistle is "Christ in you, the hope of glory"; the doctrine of the Epistle is "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Nowhere in St. Paul's writings do we find such a magnificent vision of the pre-eminence of Christ—"All things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, and He is Head of the Body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

COLOSSÆ.

As the Epistle itself tells us, it is written to the Christians at Colossæ. The latter was an ancient city of Phrygia, in the Roman province of Asia. It was built on the Lycus, a river which is referred to by Herodotus (iv. 123), and Ovid (*Met.* xv. 273). Hero-

dotus further says that Colossæ was " a Phrygian city of great size situated at a spot where the river Lycus plunges into a chasm and disappears " (vii. 30). In the days of Xerxes and Cyrus it was an important town, but it fell into approaching insignificance as Laodicea rose, for in the days of Strabo (xii., viii. 13) it was but a small place, being eventually destroyed by an earthquake in the time of Nero.

Colossæ was closely associated with Laodicea (10 miles distant) and Hierapolis (13 miles away). These were cities to which St. Paul never journeyed (Col. ii. 1), doubtless because they did not lie along the great lines of communication. But it has been reasonably suggested that the Church at Laodicea, which is one of the seven Churches to which St. John was directed in the vision to send his message (Rev. i. 11; iii. 14), represented the other Churches in the Lycus valley also. This fact may give substantial support to the belief, already stated, that the Epistle to the Ephesians was a circular letter, written to the Churches in Asia Minor, of which, in the Lycus Valley, Laodicea was the chief.

THE INFLUENCE OF ST. PAUL.

We have no knowledge at our disposal to inform us as to the origin of the Churches in the three cities of the Lycus valley—Laodicea, Colossæ, and Hierapolis (Col. iv. 13). It is more than probable that they were founded indirectly by St. Paul, but not personally by him, as a result of his long stay at Ephesus, " so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks " (Acts xix. 10). St. Paul was closely acquainted with certain Colossian citizens who became Christians, and amongst them we may remember Epaphras, Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and Onesimus. It has been conjectured that Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus may have been husband, wife

and son, respectively, Onesimus being their slave (Col. iv. 12, 13, 17; Phil. 20, 23). Epaphras had been sent by the Colossian Church to comfort St. Paul during his Roman imprisonment, and was himself imprisoned (Phil. 23). Probably Timothy had been working in Colossæ under the direction of St. Paul, as he joined with him in writing the Letter (i. 1).

THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

Ephesus, being the capital of the Roman Province of Asia, was the seat of government, and consequently it is not unlikely that the whole province was evangelised from its headquarters, under the leadership of St. Paul, who was ably assisted by a staff of subordinate helpers such as Timothy, Erastus (Acts xix. 22), Titus, and others. In fact Professor Ramsay thinks that "all the Seven Churches mentioned in the *Revelation* were probably founded during this period, for all were within easy reach of Ephesus, and all were great centres of trade. It is probable that they, being the first foundations of the province, retained a sort of representative character; and thus they were addressed in the *Revelation* (perhaps as heads over districts), when there were certainly other Churches in the province (*St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, p. 274).

PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle was written as a result of the tidings which Epaphras brought to St. Paul. Had Epaphras not remained with the Apostle as a "fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 23) this magnificent letter would never have been written. But as Epaphras was prevented from returning to Colossæ with greetings to the Church from St. Paul, the latter wrote the Epistle and sent it by the hand of Tychicus, with the command that it be read both at Colossæ and Laodicea, and that

the Laodicean Epistle (probably the circular letter, known to us as the Epistle to the Ephesians) be read at Colossæ also (iv. 16).

THE COLOSSIAN HERESY.

Epaphras brought, on the whole, a satisfactory account of the Colossian Church, because St. Paul thanked God for their "work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope" (i. 2-4). But the master mind of the Apostle was quick to detect the signs of an approaching danger—as always—from the evil influence of false teachers. For there were those who sought to combine with Christianity the speculations of the philosophers, such as in the following century developed into Gnosticism. Much doubt still remains as to what was exactly the nature of the Colossian heresy. It seems to have been a blend of Jewish Kabbalistic ideas with floating oriental speculations. Doctrinally, it apparently denied the direct agency of God in the work of Creation (i. 15-19), and asserted the necessity of worshipping angels and other unseen powers (ii. 18). Practically, it emphasised a strict observance of Jewish ceremonial (ii. 16), combined with a rigorous asceticism (ii. 23), not unmixed with an arrogant claim to a special and spiritual enlightenment (ii. 18).

CHRIST THE FULNESS OF GOD.

The result of this false teaching led some of the Colossian Christians to depreciate the unique grandeur of the ascended Lord. St. Paul therefore replies by defining the nature of Christ, as Creator and Redeemer, both in relation to the universe in general (i. 15-17), and to the Church in particular (i. 17-23). Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the First Born of all creation"; He is the End, the mediating Cause, and the uniting Bond of the existing universe, whether seen or unseen; and "He is the Head of the body, the

Church." The work of Christ the Redeemer is thus based upon, and rendered parallel to, that of Christ the Creator.

St. Paul thus teaches that Christ is the fulness of God. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." His absolute pre-eminence over the universe of things seen and unseen enabled Christ "through the blood of His Cross" to "reconcile all things unto Himself." But "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossæ" belonged to the stock of Israel, and that is why St. Paul reminds them that they were "in times past alienated . . . yet now reconciled" (i. 21, R.V.) through the perfected work of the Creator-Redeemer.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

This leads the Apostle to teach the fulness of the Christian life as lived in the power of the ascended Lord. It is a life that centres its affections on things above (iii. 1-4). It requires mortification of the flesh through victory of the Spirit. It involves the investment of a new Christ-like character, with a separation from old sins (iii. 5-11). It bespeaks a social condition of brotherly affection, abiding peace, and personal consecration with perpetual thanksgiving (iii. 12-17). It demands a rightful discharge of family duties, and it adjusts with mutual respect and equity the relationship between master and man (iii. 18—iv. 1). It invokes constancy in prayer, and commands wisdom in both word and deed (iv. 2-6).

Thus should redeemed Israel, and through Israel all believers in Christ Jesus, "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (iv. 12). We are saved to serve, and we have to exhibit to all peoples the living Christ indwelling the human heart. Then, and not until then, will the motto of the Epistle to the Colossians ring true—*Christ in you the fulness of God, and the hope of glory.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS (I.)

IT has been mentioned before that the Epistles of St. Paul are not placed in the Bible in the order in which they were written. There is no doubt that the first Epistles which St. Paul wrote are those which we know as the Thessalonian Letters. In utmost probability they were written from Corinth in the year 52 A.D.

The Gospel was first preached at Thessalonica by St. Paul and Silas after their imprisonment at Philippi (Acts xvi., xvii.). Unlike Philippi, Thessalonica did have a Jewish Synagogue, and, as always, it attracted the careful attention of St. Paul. For at least three weeks St. Paul devoted his time to the Jews, "and some of them believed." But eventually a tumult arose against Jason, the Apostle's host, and his guests. The unbelieving Jews and disorderly crowds accused them of having "turned the world upside down." Jason was bound over to keep the peace, and the brethren sent Paul and Silas under cover of darkness to Berea, where Silas remained with Timothy, while Paul was "conducted to" Athens (Acts xvii. 1-15). St. Paul then sent for Silas and Timothy, and waited for them at Athens. Had he proceeded straight to Corinth, without waiting at Athens, he might never have delivered that wonderful address from Areopagus (Acts xvii. 18-31) which has so greatly enriched our knowledge of St. Paul's didactic spirituality. From Athens St. Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to establish and to comfort the Christians in their faith (1 Thess. i. 2). Timothy rejoined Paul at Corinth and brought him an account

of the steadfastness of the Thessalonian Christians which filled him with joy and gratitude (iii. 6-9), and re-awakened his desire to visit them once again. But being constantly disappointed through the hindrance of Satan, the Apostle dispatched to them these two Epistles.

THESSALONICA

was a very important city of the Roman Province of Macedonia. It was situated on the great overland route from Italy to the East at the head of the Thermaic Gulf. From its admirable position, and also from its possessing a good port, it was the most important commercial town of the district, and with its modern name of Salonica is only too well-known in connection with the great events of the past few years. Its original name was Therma, from the hot springs in the neighbourhood. It was Casander who, rebuilding the city in B.C. 315, changed its name to Thessalonica, after his wife, who was the step-sister of Alexander the Great. Under the Romans it became the metropolis of Macedonia, B.C. 146, and was made a "free city," a fact which is known by St. Luke in view of a certain expression which he uses (Acts xvii. 5; *εἰς τὸν δῆμον*). It was thus governed by six supreme magistrates.

St. Luke uses the unusual word *politarchs* in describing these magistrates (xvii. 6, 8). This word is not found in Greek literature, although it is noteworthy that it occurs in an inscription of about the date 69-79 A.D., found on an arch at Thessalonica, a fact which adds to the authenticity of the narrative and to the accuracy of St. Luke.

It is quite clear that the city of Thessalonica contained a large admixture of Jews and Gentiles. The Gentiles consisted of heathen Greeks and Romans, together with a large proportion of Greek-speaking Israelites; it was

therefore amongst the Jews and the Israelites that St. Paul preached, and amongst whom he founded the Thessalonian Church.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

These Epistles are eschatological, being famous for their doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. When preaching at Thessalonica St. Paul must have dwelt very largely on the return of the Lord Jesus from heaven, and the Kingdom of God. Timothy, in the tidings which he brought back to St. Paul, must have informed the Apostle of certain misunderstandings that had arisen in Thessalonica. The Christians had been very impressed by the teaching of St. Paul and his colleagues, but their words had been exaggerated and misunderstood in various ways. Some feared that their dead or dying friends would be shut out of the approaching kingdom (1 Thess. iv. 13-18); others sought to calculate "the times and the seasons" (v. 1) in connection with "the day of the Lord." Others pondered upon the thought of the speedy return of the Lord, and depreciated the responsibilities of this life in consequence. Several members of the Church quitted their employment, and caused the burden of their maintenance to rest upon the society, to the disregard of official remonstrance (iv. 10-12, v. 12-14). In fact, so much misunderstanding had arisen with regard to the Second Coming of Christ that St. Paul wrote on the first occasion to place this, the greatest of Christian hopes, in its proper perspective. When therefore the Apostle wrote the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, he was compelled to deal openly and sternly with the offenders, lest the peace of the Church be impaired (2 Thess. iii. 6-16), as in the previous Epistle he had warned the steadier Christians not to quench the Spirit, nor to despise spiritual gifts (v. 19-22).

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS.

The doctrine of the Second Advent has been subject to many and divers interpretations. Some have thought it to refer to the death of the Christian, when the spirit leaves the body and goes into the presence of Christ, "which is far better." Thus Christ comes to call the soul to Himself when the earth life has finished its course. Others have maintained that Christ will literally come "in the air" and fetch those who are "looking for His appearing." Others, again, have seen the doctrine of the Second Coming in the light of dispensational truth, and believe that Christ cannot come until the close of the present dispensation, when, with the re-union of Israel and Judah in the land, the world will be ripe for the millennial reign of Christ.

Others still have taught that there will be no physical or personal return of the Lord, because "henceforth we know no man after the flesh," not even Christ (2 Cor. v. 16). In support of their view they maintain that it is a materialistic conception of spiritual things to look for a Personal return, especially in view of the triumph of His resurrection and the glory of His ascension. If you ask the supporters of this view what St. Paul meant when he said "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 17), they reply that St. Paul was speaking of the Christians of his immediate generation, who would still be alive supposing that Christ were to return in their day. But that as Christ did not come in that day, these words must not be taken literally now. They will also tell you that as St. Paul matured in his Christian experience, his doctrine of the Second Coming progressed in thought, and that towards the close of his life he looked forward to going to Christ rather than Christ coming to him (2 Tim. iv. 6-8).

And yet there are others who teach that the Second Coming refers to that day when the human race will be so enriched with spiritual discernment, to the overcoming of materialism, that through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh Christ will become so real, so close, and so precious, that it will be just as if He were reigning in spiritual presence on the earth, "and every eye shall see Him."

A SOLEMN FACT.

Perhaps with reserve there may be something said for those who believe that each of the above views contains a vision of truth, and who maintain that it is impossible for us at this stage to dogmatize with regard to the interpretation of so great a doctrine. Every generation has believed that Christ would come in its day. The Thessalonian Christians believed it. Many Christians believe it now. *But so far Christ has not yet come.* The teaching of the Bible, and more particularly the combined teaching of Christ Himself, of St. Paul, and of St. John, may be summed up thus—*Christ will come some day: Christ may come any day.* And this is the fulness and the joy of the Christian hope; nor can it be expressed otherwise. It serves as an incentive to be always ready in the Christian life "to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming (literally, *presence*) of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thess. iii. 13).

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS (II).

THE doctrine of the Second Advent, which forms so important a part in the teaching of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, is, as it were, the centre of gravity in the Second Epistle.

Only once does the First Epistle make any specific reference to the Cross (v. 9, 10), although salvation through the blood of Christ is the basis of the message which the Apostle sent to the Thessalonian Christians, as to all the other Churches to whom he wrote. Dr. Jowett, the famous Master of Balliol, in his renowned Commentary on *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans*, says (p. 7): "The coming of Christ was the leading thought of his (the Apostle's) mind at that time. The Gospel which he preached in both Epistles (to the Thessalonians) might be described not as the Gospel of the Cross of Christ, but of the Coming of Christ."

ERRONEOUS MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

Now we have seen that the Christians of Thessalonica had misunderstood the Pauline doctrine of the Second Coming, and that errors had crept in, to the disturbing of the peace of the Church. We have also seen that St. Paul wrote the first Epistle in order to eradicate those errors, and to influence the mind of the Thessalonian Church to a fuller and more accurate perspective of the Second Coming. But even then all was not well. The fact that Christ did not return in that generation,

added to the solemn fact that death then, as always, was taking its toll from the Christian community, caused further misunderstandings. Apparently there were many who thought that there would be no death, because the Lord would return before the angel of death could fulfil his duties. There were others who presumed, notwithstanding the admonitions of the First Epistle, to announce that the day of the Lord was close at hand, and who even claimed the Apostle's authority for this declaration (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2).

St. Paul therefore wrote this Second Epistle to clear the air, and to remove that agitation of mind which was assuming so morbid and dangerous a character. After thanking God for their growing faith and abounding love, St. Paul encourages them in the hour of persecution and tribulation, and prays that they may be counted worthy of their calling, that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in them.

THE ANTICHRIST.

He then goes straight to the point and exposes the error which had led to such unhappiness of mind with regard to "the day of the Lord" (2 Thess. ii. 1-12). This is the famous passage which reveals the temporary ascendancy of "the man of sin." Reminding the Thessalonian Christians of what he had said when he was with them, the Apostle hints that he had spoken more of the unexpectedness of the event of Christ's coming than of the nearness of its approach. He explains that it must be preceded by the "apostasy" or "falling away," and by the revelation of the "man of sin," the great spiritual usurper who professes to be God, and greater than God.

But St. Paul indicates that even the "apostasy" and the "man of sin" could not be revealed until "he who now letteth . . . be taken out of the way."

SOME IMPORTANT PROBLEMS.

Here, therefore, are three problems which have exercised the minds of thoughtful Christians for many long centuries. A full diagnosis and examination of them here would be impossible, so the student is referred to commentaries on the Epistle, and to the host of books on *Prophecy* which deal with the subject, adequately or otherwise. The three problems are :—

- (i.) What is the “apostasy”?
- (ii.) Who is the “man of sin”?
- (iii.) What is meant by “he that letteth”?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS.

(i.) The “apostasy” means a falling away from the true worship of the living God. Notice that St. Paul does not say “a falling away,” but “the falling away” (2 Thess. ii. 3; ἡ ἀποστασία), as if he had a definite period of defection in view, defined in the following verses.

(ii.) There have been several interpretations put forward relating to “the man of sin.” Some have seen in him a living person. Others have regarded him as an anti-Christian power. At different periods in Christian history, Caligula, Nero, Mahommed, the Pope, Napoleon, and more recently the Kaiser, have in turn been regarded as fulfilling the prediction of “the man of sin.” Some think that he will be a Jew, who will impersonate the Messiah. Others think that the Devil is waiting to find out the secret of the Incarnation, when he will become incarnate in human flesh, and so become “the man of lawlessness,” as Christ was “the Man of righteousness.”

The interpretations which have gained the greatest weight are of those who, before, and after Bishop Wordsworth, have regarded the “man of sin” as being the Papacy, and who have connected this prophecy with

the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. I have described more fully elsewhere (*Prophecy, the War and the Near East*, Chaps. VII., VIII.) the place of the Vatican in prophecy. To what extent Rome (political), which has been behind Germany for many years, is now in league with Bolshevism, remains to be seen. But it is probable that "the man of sin" may be studied in the newer phase of Bolshevism as the avowed enemy of Israel, which is working to the overthrowing of Christianity.

(iii.) The expression "he that letteth," etc., has always been a perplexing problem for investigation. The literal translation is "And now ye know that which hinders [him, the "man of sin"], in order that he [the "man of sin"] may be revealed in his own time, for the mystery already is working of lawlessness, only until he that now hinders be removed."

THE EARLY FATHERS.

The early Fathers, generally speaking, interpreted *ὁ κατέχων* to refer to the Imperial Roman Empire, and this belief has held strong sway, and perhaps rightly so, ever since. By this interpretation it is understood that the Papacy could not arise until after the collapse of the Roman Empire, which agrees with history. For Rome Imperial collapsed in A.D. 476, and Rome spiritual did not rise until the Decree of Phocas in A.D. 607 (see my chart in above book). In other words, the Fall of the Roman Empire served as the removal of the hindrance which up to that time had prevented the Roman Church from becoming the great spiritual-political power for "time, times, and a half." The Pope as a spiritual and political power took the place of the Cæsar, who was the great imperial power, and both Cæsar and Pope reigned, respectively, on the Tiber.

But some of the early Fathers, quoted by Theodoret and Chrysostom, rejected the view that "he that hinders" referred to the Roman Empire, and thought that it might possibly refer to the work of the Holy Spirit, Who for a time would keep at bay the forces of evil. This view has not received much support, although it may be added that the Plymouth Brethren, who during the past century have given much study, frequently with great scholarship (Darby, Kelly, etc.), to the doctrine of the Second Coming, have regarded the "hindrance" as referring to the Holy Spirit, Who, in their interpretation, would be withdrawn on the occasion of "the rapture of the Church." Yet if "that which hinders" be God's decree, then "he that hinders" would refer to *God Himself*; but it cannot be said of Him "until He be removed." The fact that the "hindrance" is neuter the first time, and masculine the second, suggests that the hindrance spoken of may be regarded indifferently as a thing or a person, and this would more clearly apply to the Vatican or the Popes.

Professor Jowett has contributed a notable essay "On the Man of Sin" in his Commentary (Vol. I., pp. 178-194), in which he weighs the interpretation of the Roman Empire against that of the Jewish Law, and decides in favour of the "man of sin" referring to the Jewish Law, whose withdrawal, which, when it lost its inspired character, opened the door to the forces of evil licentiousness. His arguments, which, however, are not convincing to students of British-Israelism, are based on the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel.

A SOLEMN WARNING.

In conclusion, it may be added that we recommend the interpretation of the "hindrance" as referring to Rome Imperial, and of the "man of sin" as referring to Rome spiritual and Bolshevism. We believe that the

Epistle holds out a warning to "live a godly, righteous and sober life," looking for that day when Christ shall destroy with the brightness of His coming all those evil and anti-Christian forces which the Devil is still arraigning against the Gospel of peace, which is entrusted to the British and American House of redeemed Israel.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES (I.).

THE two Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus are called *the Pastoral Epistles*, because they were intended in the first instance for ministers, and not for Churches. By some they have been called *the Ecclesiastical Epistles*, because they deal primarily with the qualifications and duties which belong to Church office and the care of souls.

They were written towards the close of St. Paul's ministry, and are not without a valedictory character, especially 2 Timothy, which is the last Epistle that St. Paul ever wrote. We therefore see in them the Apostle's farewell to the Church, and his last charge to his successors in the ministry of the Gospel. We have a privileged view of St. Paul in his old age, and a glimpse of him on the verge of martyrdom (2 Timothy iv. 6). The picture thus given of the Apostle in the light of the circumstances and feelings associated with the closing period of his glorious career, is more than precious, although it is faint and obscure in some of its details.

TIMOTHY.

Timothy was St. Paul's constant and trusted companion, and was a native of Derbe or Lystra—more probably the latter (Acts xvi. 1, xx. 4). When a mere youth, Timothy came under the influence of St. Paul on his Second Missionary Journey. Possibly he had been converted by him when the Apostle visited Lystra on his First Journey (Acts xiv. 6), for we find that Timothy was already "well reported of by the brethren

that were at Lystra and Iconium " when St. Paul went there on the Second Journey (Acts xvi. 2).

His parentage was unusual, for his mother was a Jewess, who had been married to a Greek. It is not improbable that his Greek father was of Israelite descent, of the tribe of Benjamin, for it must be remembered that Benjamin was especially chosen for spreading the evangelistic tidings of redemption; and in taking a fancy to Timothy, St. Paul may have felt a feeling of kinship in selecting a fellow-tribesman.

A YOUTHFUL MINISTER.

St. Paul himself converted Timothy, and then ordained him, when he was yet quite young, in conjunction with local presbyters (1 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 18, iv. 12-16; 2 Tim. i. 6). Possibly it was at his ordination that the young minister " confessed the good confession in the sight of many witnesses " (1 Tim. vi. 12).

Although St. Paul was opposed to the Judaising tendencies of some of the early Christians, including St. Peter (Gal. ii. 11-21), he nevertheless thought it expedient to circumcise Timothy, who had hitherto been brought up as a Gentile (Acts xvi. 3), in order to facilitate his ministry among the Jews, as his own mother was a Jewess. St. Paul considered this step to be expedient in view of his principle of always preaching the Gospel " to the Jew first," the more so as the Jews would have been offended by the presence in their midst of one who was a half-Jew by birth, and yet who had never been circumcised.

Timothy owed a great deal to his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, who had taught him from a child to learn and reverence the Scriptures (2 Tim. i. 5, iii. 15). His bringing up has afforded an example which should ever serve as an influence to Christian parents in the religious instruction of the young.

The result of Timothy's upbringing, conversion, and ordination, was that he became a loyal companion, slaving for St. Paul as a son for a father (Phil. ii. 20-23). He did a great work at Thessalonica (1 Thess. iii. 2). He accompanied St. Paul to Beroëa, and remained there while St. Paul went to Athens, whither Timothy followed him. Eventually they met again at Corinth (Acts xvii. 13-15, xviii. 1, 5).

Later on we find Timothy with St. Paul at Ephesus on the occasion of his Third Missionary Journey. Here, as formerly, St. Paul called upon Timothy, in company with other brethren, to go on a mission to Macedonia, and thence to Corinth (Acts xix. 22; 1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10), which mission took place shortly before the writing of the 1st Corinthians. The last mention of Timothy in the Acts (xx. 4, 5) was when St. Paul started on his last journey to Jerusalem, when Timothy and others accompanied him. He must, in due course, have been with St. Paul in Rome, when the latter was a prisoner, for he is associated with the Apostle when the Prison Epistles were written (Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; Philem. 1), while St. Paul had it in mind to send Timothy on a mission to the Church at Philippi.

BISHOP OF EPHEBUS.

Eventually St. Paul left Timothy in charge of the Church at Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 2, 3), and gave him full instructions as to how he was to rule the Church in his absence. As the Apostle thought that he might be detained longer than he expected, he wrote the First Epistle to Timothy with the avowed intention of emphasising points of primary importance, and of strengthening the youthful Bishop in the arduousness of the task, especially as the latter was entrusted to one who was naturally timid, frequently sick, and hesitant in the act of asserting his own authority (1 Cor. xvi. 10; 1 Tim. v. 23, iv. 12).

It is probable that when St. Paul was imprisoned for the second time at Rome, prior to his martyrdom, Timothy (to whom the Apostle had just written the Second Epistle, and the last of his Letters) may have hastened to bid his father in the faith an affectionate and reverent farewell (2 Tim. i. 4; iv. 9, 21). In which case he may have been imprisoned, also, for we are perhaps otherwise unable to account for Timothy being "set at liberty" (Heb. xiii. 23). No definite knowledge is to hand with regard to his subsequent history. Some think (with little likelihood of the fact) that Timothy may have been "the angel of the Church in Ephesus" (Rev. ii. 1-7).

THE STORY OF TRADITION.

Tradition asserts that he remained Bishop of Ephesus until his death (*Const. Apostol.* vii. 46; Eusebius *H.E.* iii. 4), having been martyred under Domitian or Nerva, in consequence of the fury of the mob, who objected to his protesting against the licentious worship connected with the Ephesine goddess Artemis. Those who are fortunate enough to possess Cave's *Lives of the Fathers* will find an interesting account (The Life of St. Timothy, viii.) of the idolatrous festival known as *Karayōγιον*, whose violent and coarse orgies led to the death of Timothy. Whereupon, "being dead, the Christians of Ephesus took his body, and decently interred it in a place called Pion. Piron (says Isodore, who adds that 'twas a mountain), where it securely rested for some ages, till Constantine the Great; or as others, his son Constantius caused it to be translated to Constantinople and laid up, together with those of St. Andrew and St. Luke, in the great church erected by Constantine to the Holy Apostles."

It may be noted that Cave speaks of "St. Timothy, the Apostle and Evangelist." But except for the classi-

fication of the name of Timothy with that of St. Paul and Silas on one occasion (1 Thess. i. 1, ii. 6) "as apostles of Christ," we have no reason for thinking that Timothy was an Apostle, technically speaking, as the latter had to be a witness of Christ's resurrection (Acts i. 22). More correctly he was regarded as an evangelist (2 Tim. iv. 5), having received a formal ministry (1 Tim. iv. 6; Acts xix. 22).

ST. PAUL'S BELOVED CHILD.

At St. Paul's death Timothy was still quite young, probably being not more than thirty-five years of age. He was greatly beloved by the aged Apostle, who speaks of him in terms of unusual endearment. Timothy is St. Paul's "own son in the faith" (1 Tim. i. 2), his "beloved child" (2 Timothy i. 2, R.V.), his "beloved and faithful child in the Lord" (1 Cor. iv. 17). He is "like-minded" (Phil. ii. 20), he "worketh the work of the Lord" as does St. Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 10). He is St. Paul's "work-fellow" (Rom. xvi. 21), "our brother and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the Gospel of Christ" (1 Thess. iii. 2). He is a "bond-servant (with St. Paul) of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 1), seeking "the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. ii. 21).

Of no one else does St. Paul speak with such great and devoted affection. He was to St. Paul personally what the Philippian Church was to the Apostle collectively. Of Timothy, therefore, St. Paul could say with equal truth: *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.*

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES (II.).

THE two Epistles to Timothy are of great value, being full of spiritual instruction. Being pastoral Epistles they differ from the generality of St. Paul's Epistles because they are written to an individual and not to a Church. They have therefore a personal character in a double sense—personal in the mind of the writer, and personal in the mind of the recipient. In this respect they are full of personal instruction, the same applying of course to the third pastoral Epistle, viz., that to Titus.

The salutation in the pastoral Epistles when compared with the salutations in the Epistles to the Churches contains this difference : when St. Paul writes to the Churches he prays that they may have grace and peace (with the exception of the Epistle to the Galatians), whereas when he writes to the ministers of the Gospel, Timothy and Titus, he prays that they may have “grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.” Is it that St. Paul regards the work of the ministry as of so difficult and delicate a character that the minister of the Gospel needs not only grace and peace, but also mercy from on high for the undertaking of his spiritual and soul-winning duties?

Bearing in mind the priesthood of the laity (1 Peter ii. 9), we may point out that these Epistles have a message for all Christians, whether they be ordained ministers or not. On the other hand, they are not without direct reference to the ministry of Israel, and in

consequence they give the clearest revelation of the character, the qualifications, the duties, and the defence of the minister of Christ.

THE MINISTER OF CHRIST.

(i.) *His character.* We have an insight into what the character of the minister of the Gospel should be. He must have love, a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned (1 Tim. i. 5). He must be a man of prayer, praying for all in authority in Church and State, for the peaceable godliness of the nation, and for the salvation of all men (ii. 1-4). He must be *strengthened* (ἐνδυναμοῦν, 2 Tim. ii. 1; not *strong*—there is a difference) in Christian grace, and prove himself to be a hardy soldier of Jesus Christ, with the words *Remember Jesus Christ*, once crucified, now risen from the dead, always ringing in his ears (ii. 1-8). He must be a workman “approved unto God,” not forgetting that a workman is known both by his tools and by the quality of his work. Turning a deaf ear to gossip, he must be “a vessel unto honour (in every sense of the term), sanctified, meet for the Master’s use,” avoiding therefore youthful temptations, and seeking the path of righteousness in the spirit of love, peace and gentleness (ii. 15-26). Conscious of the frailty of his own, and of all, human nature, he must shine from his heart “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” in order to eclipse the weakness of the earthen vessel, to the glory of God (2 Cor. iv. 6).

(ii.) *His qualifications.* The Christian minister must be a converted man (1 Tim. i. 12-16), “sent forth by the Holy Ghost” (Acts xiii. 2, 4), ordained by the laying on of hands (iv. 14, v. 22), a Bible student (2 Tim. iii. 15), pure in his life, and loyal to his home (1 Tim. v. 22, iii. 2, 4, 12), abstemious and self-controlled

(ii. 3, v. 23), humble (2 Tim. ii. 25). He must always bear in mind that he is a "man of God" (1 Tim. vi. 11), remembering that as a preacher he must "be instant in season, out of season," never forgetting that he must rebuke and exhort, encourage and teach—and always be on the watch, in order to make full proof of his ministry (2 Tim. iv. 1-5).

(iii.) *His duties.* These are manifold in detail, and world-wide in influence. He must not forget his own spiritual gifts, nor neglect his studies (1 Tim. iv. 14-16). He must be faithful in his church administration, especially in regard to widows, to elders, to servants, to the rich, and to all and sundry who come within the province of his pastoral care (1 Tim. v., vi. 1-11). Five times over is the command given to Christian ministers (and to none others) to have no love for "filthy lucre" (1 Tim. iii. 3, 8; Titus i. 7, 11; 1 Peter v. 2; cf. also 1 Tim. vi. 11).

There are seven "good" things which he must cherish—the good law (1 Tim. i. 8), the good warfare (i. 18), the good conscience (i. 19), the good service (v. 4), the good works (v. 25), the good fight (vi. 12), and the good confession (vi. 12).

Of "good works" there are seven classifications—adorned with good works (1 Tim. ii. 9-10); reported for good works (v. 10); rich in good works (vi. 18), furnished to all good works (2 Tim. iii. 17), a pattern of good works (Titus ii. 7), zealous of good works (Titus ii. 14), and maintain good works (Titus iii. 8).

(iv.) *His defence.* Apart from his pastoral and ministerial duties, the Christian minister is to be always a "defender of the faith" against error and heresy, and such evils that may creep in, in opposition to and destruction of the principles of Christianity. These evils are to be anticipated in "the last days," and they can only be met by the power of the Gospel, and by the undaunted faith and faithfulness of those to whom the

Gospel is committed (1 Tim. iv. 1-7; 2 Tim. i. 13, iii. 1-14).

Here, then, we have traced the character, qualifications, duties and defence of the Christian minister as revealed in the Pastoral Epistles. It may therefore be fitting to make a small allusion to the origin and growth of the threefold ministry of the Christian community.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

(i.) The establishment of the *Diaconate* came first (Acts vi. 2-6), where the word *deacon* occurs in the Greek word *διακονεῖν* (to serve). The deacons were thus ordained by the laying on of hands in order to assist the Apostles, and to give relief to the poor, fixed rules of conduct being laid down for their life and work (1 Tim. iii. 8-13). It was an early custom to appoint women as deacons (Rom. xvi. 1), possibly there being an institution of ecclesiastical widows, who, whether they were deaconesses or not, served in the duties of the Church, and as such they had to be cared for (1 Tim. v. 2-16).

(ii.) The order of Presbyters (from which the contracted word *Priest* is derived) arose in the earliest of Apostolic days, but no mention is made in the New Testament of its inception. The "Presbyters" are first mentioned in connection with the Christian brotherhood at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 30). They are associated with the Apostles at Jerusalem in connection with the Council over which St. James presided, and their office was so important that they signed, with the Apostles, the decree that was sent to the Gentile brethren in Syria and Cilicia (Acts xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23), while on a future occasion St. Paul reported to them the great things which God had wrought through his ministry (Acts xxi. 18 ff). But in addition to the mother church at Jerusalem, presbyters were appointed, so far as we

know, in every church (Acts xiv. 23), although mention is not made of the act in every case, it being assumed that it was St. Paul's custom to ordain the elders or presbyters as a general mode of procedure.

But, as is well known, the presbyters were often called bishops or overseers in the days of the Apostles. In fact, at Miletus St. Paul alternates the words, calling the same men elders in one verse and bishops or overseers in another (Acts xx. 17, 28). In Apostolic writings the words are interchangeable, for the office is the same. At Philippi (Phil. i. 1), in Asia Minor (Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2; 1 Peter ii. 25, v. 1, 2), in Crete (Titus i. 5-7) the presbyter is called bishop. The duties of the presbyters or elders were twofold. They were both rulers and instructors of the congregation, a double function which appears in St. Paul's expression "pastors and teachers" (Eph. iv. 11). The government of the church was probably the first conception of the office, but St. Paul insisted upon the faculty of teaching as being a necessary qualification also (1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 9).

THE THREEFOLD MINISTRY.

Thus the two lower orders of the threefold ministry were firmly established in Apostolic days. We now come to the later and modern understanding of the word *Bishop*. It is a mistake to think that the terms Bishops and Apostles are interchangeable, for they are not. The latter are special messengers of Christ, the former local governors of the Church. The episcopate was formed not out of the Apostolic order by localisation, but out of the presbyteral by elevation; and the title, which was originally common to all, came at length to be appropriated to the chief among them.

Hence with the opening of the second Christian century we find the terms bishop, priest, and deacon, used in their modern threefold sense. Ignatius writing to

Polycarp (sec. 6) singles out the bishop as the chief officer of the Church. He also calls Polycarp "*Bishop of Smyrna*." Polycarp also, writing to the Philippians, gives directions to the *deacons* and the *presbyters*. He begins by saying, "Polycarp and the *presbyters* that are with him," thus detaching himself as bishop from the other orders. Towards the close of the second century the original application of the term "bishop" seems to have passed not only out of use, but almost out of memory, while from that time onwards the weight of history has confirmed the unbroken succession of the three orders.

But the word *bishop* was not new in Apostolic days. The title was borne at Athens by political agents sent to overlook and regulate the affairs of their subject states. It thus found a place in the Roman official nomenclature towards the close of the Republic. It was known to the translators of the LXX. Version, for they employ the term to describe the official designation of Eleazar, the son of Aaron (Num. iv. 16), the officers of the host (Num. xxxi. 14), and civil officers (Isa. lx. 17).

It was therefore presumed to be a fitting word among Greek-speaking Christians in Gentile countries to designate those church officers who had the pastoral oversight of the people.

THE MINISTRY NOT SACERDOTAL.

In conclusion, we may add that the New Testament conception of the Christian ministry knows nothing of a sacerdotal system. The presbyter has a duty which is sacramental, because he has to administer the means of grace (Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts ii. 42; 1 Cor. xi. 23-26), but never is his office a sacerdotal one. In fact, the sacerdotal element was not developed until the third century, largely owing to the influence of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in whose conception of Catholicism

the Bishop is the absolute vice-regent of Christ in things spiritual. In him the Bishop is the indispensable channel of Divine grace, the indispensable bond of brotherhood. But Bishop Lightfoot says in his famous essay on "The Christian Ministry" (*Commentary on the Philippians*, pp. 181-269), which every student ought to read and read again: "The Christian minister is God's ambassador to man; he is charged with the ministry of reconciliation; he unfolds the will of heaven; he declares in God's name the terms on which God's pardon is offered; and he pronounces in God's name the absolution of the penitent. . . . As empowered to declare the conditions of God's grace, he is empowered also to proclaim the consequences of their acceptance. But throughout his office is *representative* and not *vicarial*. He does not interpose between God and man in such a way that direct communion with God is superseded on the one hand, or that his own mediation becomes indispensable on the other. Again the Christian minister is the representative of man to God—of the congregation primarily, of the individual indirectly as a member of the congregation. The alms, the prayers, the thanksgivings of the community are offered through him. Some representation is as necessary in the Church as it is in a popular Government, and the nature of the representation is not affected by the fact that the form of the ministry has been handed down from Apostolic times, and may well be presumed to have a Divine sanction. . . . His acts are not his own, but the acts of the congregation."

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE NATION.

Any sacerdotal functions which exist in the New Testament pertain to all believers alike, and do not refer solely or specially to the ministerial office. The Christian minister is to be regarded as a priest only because

he is the mouthpiece, the representative, of a priestly race. The Apostolic ideal was forgotten within a few generations. It is the duty therefore of the redeemed Israel of to-day to reclaim the Apostolic ideal as revealed in all the Scriptures, and thus to seek a restored vision which it, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," demands as its inheritance and its glory.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES (III.).

WE now come to the third Pastoral Epistle, which in the order of the Bible follows the Epistles to Timothy, but which in reality was written by St. Paul after his first letter to Timothy, and before his second.

There is a striking resemblance between this Epistle and the First Epistle to Timothy, it being generally supposed that they were written about the same time, after the Apostle's first imprisonment at Rome and while he was on a journey. It is a remarkable letter, because it compresses into a very small compass a great deal of instruction, including doctrines, morals and discipline.

TITUS.

Titus was a companion of St. Paul, who is always mentioned by him with great affection and confidence. He was a Greek (Gal. ii. 3), and in all probability an Israelite descended from an old-time dispersion. He was a convert of St. Paul's (Titus i. 4). The fact that his name is Latin proves nothing, any more than that the name of Paul is Latin. His birthplace is unknown; some legends place it in Crete, while St. Chrysostom believed it to be at Corinth. We first hear of him when he accompanied St. Paul on his journey from Antioch to Jerusalem—a journey undertaken in connection with the question of the circumcision of Gentile Christians (Gal. ii. 1). Although St. Paul circumcised Timothy he did not compel Titus to be circumcised; howbeit there is an ambiguity underlying St. Paul's words.

It is strange that there is no mention of Titus in the Acts, although some people think that he may be included among the "certain other of them" who accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Acts xv. 2). Ten years pass by before we hear of Titus again, and that is when the Apostle wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, in which letter Titus is mentioned nine times, when Titus was sent by St. Paul on a fresh visit to Corinth to complete the collection for the Saints. We gather from the Epistle that St. Paul and Titus had been at Crete together (Titus i. 5). But there is no record in the Acts and the Epistles, other than this reference, of St. Paul having ever visited Crete, except on the solitary occasion of the shipwreck voyage in the Mediterranean (Acts xxvii. 7-13), an occasion which obviously cannot be referred to here.

BISHOP OF CRETE.

This visit to Crete must most probably have taken place after the Apostle's release from the first Roman imprisonment, for it is doubtful if it could have occurred at any other time in the course of St. Paul's ministry. The Church must have been founded in Crete before this time, perhaps as an offshoot from one of the Churches in Greece or Asia Minor, and St. Paul after visiting it with Titus left the latter in charge of it, having given him Apostolic authority to govern it, and to ordain elders in each of the Cretan cities (Titus i. 5). Here it will be noticed, as we have observed in the previous chapter, that Titus is called a bishop, or overseer, in the Apostolic sense of the term. On the other hand, Titus was regarded by subsequent historians as being Bishop of Crete, as we understand the office to-day (Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 4; *Const. Apost.* vii. 46). His name is still associated with the churches in the island. It was appealed to as a battle-cry in the struggles

of the Cretans with the Venetians. Many centuries after his death the head of Titus was carried away by the Venetians, and is supposed to be still preserved at St. Mark's, Venice.

Titus was probably older than Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 12; Titus ii. 15), and as feared by the Corinthians as they were feared by Timothy (2 Cor. vii. 15, cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 10), thus suggesting that he (Titus) was the stronger personality. He did not shrink from a difficult task (2 Cor. viii. 17), and he possessed a whole-hearted love for the Corinthian Christians (vii. 15). He was like-minded with St. Paul as a brother, and sought no personal or sordid gain (xii. 18). He was St. Paul's fellow-helper (viii. 23), and had a spiritual reputation which was famed "throughout all the churches" (viii. 18).

CRETE.

Crete is an important island, 60 miles south of Greece proper, thus forming the natural limit between the Archipelago and the Mediterranean. It is only mentioned on two occasions in the Bible (Acts xxvii.; Titus i. 5), and yet has a mythology and history dating back many thousands of years. Lying midway between three continents, Crete was from the earliest period a natural stepping-stone for the passage of early culture from Egypt and the East to mainland Greece. The Cretans themselves claimed for their island to be the birthplace of Zeus, as well as the parent of all the other divinities usually worshipped in Greece as the Olympian deities. All the early legends and traditions of the island are grouped around the name of Minos, who was a son of Zeus, and king of Knossos in Crete. While other countries, later on famous for civilisation, were sleeping in the darkness of prehistoric crudeness, Crete with its Minoan civilisation was exercising a dominant influence in the Ægæan world. Even in the Homeric poems, which belong to an age when the great Minoan

civilisation was already decadent, the Cretans appear as the only Greek people who attempted to compete with the Phœnicians as bold and adventurous navigators.

Students interested in the subject of Crete cannot do better than study the works of Sir Arthur Evans, who has excavated the Palace of Knossos and revealed the glory of its old-time culture. The last word has not yet been written with regard to the connection between the later Cretan civilisation and the origin of the Philistines, nor with regard to the Minoan Script, which is older by some two thousand years than the Phœnician.

ITS COMPLEX HISTORY.

The island was considered a most important one in the days of the Romans and the Saracens, who possessed it in turns, until the Byzantine sovereigns held it from A.D. 960 to 1204, when for four long centuries Crete remained prosperously under the dominion of the great Venetian Republic. In 1718, after many attempts made by the Turks during the past 100 years, Crete was lost to Venice, and became subject to Ottoman rule. But at the outbreak of the Greek revolution, and amid many insurrections and oscillations, Crete became alternately autonomous, and subject now to Turkey and now to Greece, until within recent years—in spite of Moslem protests—Crete has been definitely recognised as belonging to Greece.

Crete is then the island (known sometimes as "the island of Candia," a name which the Venetians gave to it officially after the Saracens) in which St. Paul left Titus as bishop or overseer. With its unique history and mythology and its ancient civilisation it is not surprising that the Apostle placed one of his most trusted ministers in charge of its island churches. Nor is it surprising that St. Paul should write such pastoral directions to Titus as would serve in the building up of

the Church of Christ, and in the establishing through all generations of the permanent continuance of the Christian ministry.

THE CHURCH OF ISRAEL.

But as the Christian ministry and the Church of Christ are Apostolical in formation, being "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-Stone," it follows that the pure Church of Protestant (as opposed to Papal) Christianity must be the Church of redeemed Israel. Now the Church of England, which is Apostolical in foundation, being older and purer than the Roman Church, is the mother church of all the churches and sects which compose British and American Christianity. The Christian ideals of Great Britain and America are the Christian ideals of redeemed Israel. From the ancient British Church has descended in many and diverse streams the pure Christian faith, which is "the victory that overcometh the world" (1 John v. 4), and which is entrusted of God to the missionary zeal of the British and American peoples. Thus what we may call British and American Christianity is the most Catholic and universal of any of the branches of Christendom. The Roman Church, in spite of its claims, is the least Catholic of all.

AN UNBROKEN CONTINUITY.

The continuity of the British Church has never been broken from Apostolic days until the present time. It has treasured the Faith of the Gospel, and sought to propagate it among all nations. Nonconformist bodies, now free and independent, are nevertheless offshoots of the Anglican Church, for from the latter they have obtained and cherished the Holy Scriptures, even if they have sought a freedom of worship, untrammelled by

conventional prayers and the Liturgy. No one can be more anxious for reunion amongst the British Churches and sects than British-Israelite believers, who look to the faith of their fathers as being the ultimate faith which shall win the world. The Book of Common Prayer is Israelite in origin, in conception, and in doctrine. The Holy Communion service is the direct descendant of the Israelite Passover, the transition having taken place through the Person and the Words of Christ on the occasion of the Last Supper.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

THE Epistle to Philemon is to the New Testament what the Book of Nehemiah is to the Old Testament. It is the pen portrait of a perfect gentleman. Here in this beautiful and exquisite letter we have a delightful communication written from one Christian gentleman to another, full of courtesy, consideration, affection, and respect.

PHILEMON.

Philemon—and the name (*φιλήμων*) means the *personification of friendliness*—was a dear and intimate friend of St. Paul, who speaks of him as “beloved and fellow-worker.” In all probability he was a resident of Colossæ, although we are not definitely told so, because Archippus, who is associated with Philemon in the salutation, belonged to Colossæ, and because Onesimus, who was a slave of Philemon’s, belonged there also (Col. iv. 9, 17; Philem. 1, 2).

We gather that Philemon was a wealthy man, since he owned slaves, and was noted for his hospitality and charity to his fellow-Christians (5-7). Furthermore, he was in a position to maintain the Church in his own house (2), and to be prepared to furnish a lodging for St. Paul, should the latter be able to visit Colossæ after all (Col. i. 2; Philem. 22). Being a man of property and position, Philemon must have been a constant visitor at Ephesus, where he must have met St. Paul originally, being converted by him, a fact of which St. Paul reminds Philemon in words well chosen and delicate (19).

The courteous strains of personal affection inscribed in this letter beg our curiosity, and we would like to know more about Philemon and his household. But, as mentioned above (Chapter XXVII.), it has been conjectured that Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus were husband, wife, and son respectively, and that Onesimus was their runaway slave. Tradition has it that Philemon was Bishop of Colossæ, and that Archippus was Bishop of Laodicea (*Apost. Const.* vii. 46), while Ignatius, who wrote an Epistle to the Ephesians (about A.D. 107), mentions a certain Onesimus as Bishop of Ephesus, although it is a moot point as to whether the latter be this Onesimus or another.

ONESIMUS.

Onesimus was the cause which precipitated the writing of this letter. He had stolen from his master (18), and had then run away to Rome, the common hiding-place of criminals. There he had come into contact with St. Paul in prison, and was converted by him to Christianity (10). Immediately there sprang up a devoted affection between the Apostle and the criminal slave. St. Paul would have kept him for his own personal use, for he terms himself "aged" (*πρεσβύτερος*, Latin Vulgate, *senex*), and would have found him "profitable" to himself. But *noblesse oblige*, and St. Paul, out of courtesy to Philemon, sends Onesimus back to him, bearing this letter, so as to prepare Philemon for the reception of him who was formerly his criminal slave, but now a converted man.

Notice the exquisite and noble way in which St. Paul handles so delicate a matter in asking Philemon to take back the slave who had wronged him. Perhaps all was working in accordance with God's plan for the salvation of Onesimus, who perchance was to be a bishop and a martyr. Had he not stolen, he would not have run away. Had he not run away he would not

have met St. Paul. Had he not met St. Paul he might not have been converted. But, as "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose," St. Paul gently reminds Philemon that perhaps God had overruled the incident for a higher purpose, and would have him receive Onesimus, no longer as a slave, but as "a brother beloved." Nor can we fail to observe that little touch of personal pathos: "If thou count me, therefore, as a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account," and all "for love's sake."

THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle—the shortest of St. Paul's writings—belongs to the Prison Group, being classified with the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians. But in other ways it stands unique, and may be regarded as the idyll of the New Testament. It will be noticed that in both the Ephesian and Colossian Letters, St. Paul placed *faith* first, and *love* second (Eph. i. 15; Col. i. 4). But in this idyll St. Paul places *love* first, and *faith* second, thus making the constraining power of Christian love to take precedence over the dogma of faith, as differentiated between a doctrinal Epistle and a personal letter.

Nor can we fail to observe that the master mind of the Apostle does not hesitate to emphasise his personal desire by using reverently what we may call a play upon words. Almost does he make *puns* to win in confidential humour the consent of Philemon to receive Onesimus once again into the bosom of his family. *Onesimus* means "profitable." But in verse 11 St. Paul employs a synonym for Onesimus with two different prefixes (*ἀχρηστον, εὐχρηστον*) translated "unprofitable," "profitable." But these two words in Greek contain the name *Christ* as then pronounced, thus conveying the idea that

Onesimus ("profitable") was formerly *without Christ*, "unprofitable," but now, after his conversion, he was to be regarded as *wholly Christian*, and therefore "profitable."

We have a glimpse, then, into the boundless faith which St. Paul had in the power of the Gospel. He is convinced that Onesimus will make good his name, that the *un-Christian* will become *Christian*, and that the *useless* will become *useful*, nor was his deep conviction barren of fruitful results.

SLAVERY.

One of the salient points of this Epistle is not so much the *fact* of its attitude towards slavery, but the *consequence* of its attitude towards slavery. To the modern mind slavery is one of the greatest evils which have ever contaminated the soul of humanity. In Bible days slavery not only existed, but was even sanctioned by Christian teaching, otherwise there is little doubt but that St. Paul would have condemned it. On the other hand, the Apostle constantly uses the Greek word for slave without any hesitation, as being illustrative of his own and of the Christian's attitude as a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. In fact, including all its usages, the word (*δοῦλος*, slave or bondservant) occurs some sixty-five times in the New Testament.

Nowhere did the slaves have an unhappier lot than within the bounds of the Roman Empire. Gibbon (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. I., Chap. 2) says, "There still remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free States of antiquity, the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigour of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Roman Empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian

captives, taken in thousands by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price, accustomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and revenge their fetters."

THE DEGRADATION OF SLAVES.

They were subject to a misery all but irremediable, and to the vices inseparable from their intolerable condition. Owing to the inhuman degradation of their lot, it was impossible for slaves to be other than creatures of misery, subject to circumstances over which they had no control. In fact, the large number of slaves kept in individual households was bound to breed discontent, laziness, lying, sulkiness, thieving, and even murder. Horace (*Sat.* I. iii. 12) seems to regard ten slaves as a moderate number for a person in comfortable circumstances to possess. Classical literature abounds in allusions to Greek and Roman slavery, in which the cruelty of slavemasters is pitted against the revenge, cowardice, and hatred nurtured in the bosom of the slave. The master held absolute control over the slave. He could practise the most cruel barbarities on him, or even kill him with impunity. Slaves were looked upon in the light of pieces of goods, and tyrannical masters had serious doubts whether they should be considered as human beings at all. Aristotle (*de Republ.* i. 4) pronounces a slave to be merely a piece of property, and makes him, in fact, a little more than a machine possessed of life. Slave-rebellions actually took place once and again, and that such outbreaks were constant causes of apprehension we learn from Plato (*Republ.* ix.).

Students who are interested in the subject of slavery in classical times cannot do better than study Becker's *Gallus* (Excursus iii. scene 1) for slavery under the Romans, and Becker's *Charicles* (Excursus to scene 7) for slavery under the Greeks. Both books can be obtained in Longman's Silver Library Edition.

It is, therefore, under these conditions that we read of Onesimus, who was a Phrygian slave, and perhaps an Israelite. If the Cretans were liars, the Phrygians were notorious for being cowardly, and incorrigible except by blows. Onesimus must perpetually have provoked Philemon. He was also liable to the stringent severity of the Roman law which had to deal with the running away of slaves.

THE ATTITUDE OF CHRISTIANITY.

What, then, was the attitude of St. Paul towards slavery, and what, it may be asked, was the teaching of Christ?

If neither our Lord nor St. Paul condemned slavery *qua* slavery, what is the attitude of the Bible, and of the Christian conscience, towards so inhuman an iniquity? Can it be shown that the teaching of the New Testament is, after all, opposed to slavery, even if it nowhere expressly condemns it? The answer is in the affirmative.

The practical principle of the Sermon on the Mount, and of the teaching of Christ and His Gospel, may be summarised in the altruistic law: *Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you* (Matt. vii. 12). This at once regulates all human associations and intercourse, and places man in his right position with regard to God and his fellow-man. Thus St. Paul reminds both master and slave that each has a responsible duty, the one to the other, "as unto Christ," "knowing that ye have also a Master in heaven" (Eph. vi. 5-10; Col. iii. 22—iv. 1). Therefore, in writing to Philemon, St. Paul rises above the conventional law and custom of the day, and "beseeches" him to receive Onesimus "no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a brother beloved." Thus, without condemning slavery, he advocates the Christian principle of forgiveness and fellowship, which, through the "Gospel of the Kingdom,"

has, without external compulsion by ecclesiastical authority, after eighteen centuries, seen its fruitfulness in the abolition of the slave trade, largely through the immortal influence of William Wilberforce.

THE VICTORY OF CHRIST.

It is the spirit of Christ, then, which has condemned slavery after all. If neither our Lord personally, nor the Apostles, nor the Church, issued authoritative mandates that masters were to liberate their slaves, it is noteworthy that the growing influence of Christianity (which, even in the later days of the Roman Empire, tended to alleviate the sufferings of the slaves) has brought about the abolition of a heinous practice, just at that period in the Christian dispensation when Israel was predicted to enter into the first stages of Covenant blessing, after the passing of the 2,520 years of exile.

A GREAT TYPE.

Thus does Onesimus, once a slave, then exiled by his crime, converted by St. Paul, and restored in favour to Philemon, become a wonderful type of Israel, who were exiled in the slavery of sin, until, after the redemption, they became reconciled unto God, and restored by Divine favour into the Covenant blessing of sonship and profitable service.

If, as Bishop Lightfoot says (*Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, p. 323), "the word 'emancipation' seems to be trembling on St. Paul's lips, and yet he does not once utter it," the Epistle has proved the emancipation of Onesimus, who is himself a type of the emancipation of Israel, and a type of Israel's partnership with Christ.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (I.).

THE title of this Epistle as we have it in the Authorised Version, as adopted from the Received Greek Text and from the Latin Vulgate, is not the primitive one.

In the oldest Greek MSS. (Σ, A, B, C) the title of the Epistles, like that of the other Epistles to Churches, is simply *ΠΡΟΣ ΕΒΡΑΙΟΥΣ*, "to Hebrews." This title was gradually enlarged, for the Peshito Syriac Version calls it "the Epistle to the Hebrews," while later Greek MSS. add "Epistle of Paul to Hebrews," with subsequent additions and variations.

But the title forms no part of the original document, although it must have been given to the book at a very early date, when it first passed into public use as a part of a collection of Apostolic Letters.

ITS AUTHORSHIP.

The authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the most vexed questions of all time. It is written anonymously, and is not referred to by name until the second half of the second century. It was not included among the Apostolic writings received by Marcion; nor does it find any place in the Muratorian Canon, while by this catalogue it is distinctly excluded from the Epistles of St. Paul. There are traces in the letter written by Clement of Rome to the Corinthians suggesting that he was familiar with the Epistle to the Hebrews, but in no case does he actually refer to or quote directly from it, nor does he give any indication of the author from whom his thoughts are borrowed.

Towards the close of the second century there is evidence to show that the Epistle was known in Alexandria, North Africa, Italy, and the West of Europe. At Alexandria it was held to be, at least indirectly, the work of St. Paul. It was also regarded as of Canonical authority. Clement and Origen (both of Alexandria) supported these opinions, which therefore were generally received among the Eastern Greek Churches in the third century.

At about the same period a Latin translation of the Epistle appeared in North Africa, but not as the work of St. Paul. It is spoken of by Tertullian, but is not quoted by Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. In fact, Cyprian negatively denies its Pauline authorship, for he quotes the Western statement that St. Paul "wrote to seven Churches," a statement which shows that he denies the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Nor was the Epistle held to be Pauline in Italy and Western Europe, where, as we have seen, its existence was known. Eusebius (*H.E.* v. 26) states that Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, was acquainted with it, but that he held that it "was not Paul's." It is doubtful if Irenæus regarded the Epistle as Canonical, for he does not quote it in his famous work *Against Heresies*, although it must be admitted that he has at least two apparent allusions to the Epistle (cf. *Cont. Haer.* II. xxx. 9 with Heb. i. 3, and III. xix. 1 with Heb. iv. 2).

As we have seen, the Epistle was known at Rome, as Clement's letter is coloured by it—without any direct reference or quotation—about A.D. 96. But it was at Rome that the Pauline authorship was most consistently denied, and that for the longest period.

STRICTLY ANONYMOUS.

Not only does the author observe a strict anonymity, although he is doubtless known to his readers, and

regards Timothy as a brother (xiii. 23), but he also veils himself in a cloak of tacit humility, and is content to allow his personality to sink into the background. He seems to regard himself as belonging to the Christians of the second generation (ii. 3, 4), thus classing himself amongst those who had received the Gospel second-hand, a fact which would prove an almost fatal objection to the Pauline authorship (Gal. i. 1, 11, 12; 1 Cor. ix. 1). Nor must it be forgotten that St. Paul never speaks of Timothy as a "brother," for in view of his youth he always calls him his "son" (1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2, etc.).

Much evidence might be produced to show that the popular belief in the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews lacks patristic and authoritative support, for neither sentiment nor conjecture can *prove* that St. Paul wrote this wonderful book.

But, it has so often been asked, do not internal and doctrinal evidence support its Pauline authorship? To this two answers have been given, the one positive, and the other negative.

EVIDENCE OF PAULINE AUTHORSHIP.

(a) There are those who maintain that the internal evidence is in favour of the author being St. Paul.

There are several words in the Epistle which are only used by St. Paul in his writings and speeches, or which are seldom used by any other New Testament writer. This also applies to not a few phrases and modes of expression.

The fact that the Epistle in its earliest form bore no trace of St. Paul's name, either at the beginning or at the end, carries no weight, so it is said. For St. Paul's friends would have recognised the author, and so have lovingly welcomed his letter, the more so as he wished for the Gospel's sake to avoid a reputation for preaching and teaching against the people, the law, and the temple

(Acts xxi. 28), and therefore to preserve his anonymity. It is also said that the doctrine throughout is Pauline, even if it be not quite generally typical of the doctrine of the Pauline Epistles. For the writer shows the same broad conception of the universality of the Gospel as does St. Paul elsewhere, the same vision of the age-long purpose of God wrought out through Israel, and the same faith in the atoning work of Christ.

EVIDENCE OF NON-PAULINE AUTHORSHIP.

(b) But against the Pauline authorship it has to be admitted that while the Epistle certainly may belong to what we may call "the Pauline school," it bears no evidence, whether external or internal, of having been written by St. Paul. If this is apparent to students of the English version, it is much more so to students of the Greek original. "The language of the Epistle," says Bishop Westcott in his famous *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, "is both in vocabulary and style purer and more vigorous than that of any other book in the New Testament." The style is that of a practised scholar. "The language, the order, the rhythm, the parenthic involutions, all contribute to the total effect. . . . The calculated force of the periods is sharply distinguished from the impetuous eloquence of St. Paul." Fundamentally the doctrine is the same as that, for instance, of the Epistle to the Ephesians, to which it has the closest affinity. But a different tone is given to the expression, a different colour to the thought. There is a marked difference in the spirit and the manner of the citations from the Old Testament. Nor is the Judaism of the author quite the same as that of St. Paul. It is the outlook of the prophets and of the Old Testament, more than of the Pharisees and of the schools. If it be impossible to tell where the Epistle was written from, it is conjectured that it belongs rather to Alexandrian than to Palestinian environment.

SUGGESTED 'AUTHORS.

We cannot give here all the arguments deduced to support the names of those who at one time or another, and for one reason or another, have been credited with the authorship of the Epistle. Clement of Alexandria thought that St. Paul wrote it in Hebrew (Aramaic), and that St. Luke translated it into Greek. But, apart from the fact that there is no further support for this theory, and that it was tacitly rejected by Origen, it is, on internal evidence, absolutely untenable. Luther thought that it was the work of Apollos (Acts xviii. 24), who was an Alexandrian by birth. This view has been supported in modern times by Alford and Farrar, but lacks all corroborative evidence. Delitzsch, on the grounds of its style, and linguistic likeness to the Third Gospel and the Acts, thought that St. Luke wrote it. Tertullian believed that it was the work of Barnabas, who was a Levite, and therefore in a position to write from a Levitical point of view, and to see in Christ "the High Priest of our profession." Others, without any reason whatsoever, beyond that of his friendship with St. Paul, have regarded Silas as the author.

THE DICTUM OF ORIGEN.

On the whole, we cannot do better than fall back upon the well-known words of Origen, who said (quoted by Eusebius, *H.E.* vi. 25): "If I were to express my own opinion I should say that the thoughts are the thoughts of the Apostle (St. Paul), but the language and the composition that of one who recalled from memory, and, as it were, made notes of what was said by his master. If, therefore, any Church holds this Epistle as Paul's let it be approved for this also (as for holding unquestioned truths), for it was not without reason that the men of old-time have handed it down as Paul's (that is as substantially expressing his

thoughts). But who wrote the Epistle God only knows certainly (τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν, τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς θεὸς οἶδεν). The account that we have received is twofold: some say that Clement, who became Bishop of the Romans, wrote the Epistle, others that Luke wrote it, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts. But on this I will say no more."

THE FACT OF THE EPISTLE.

Leaving aside, then, the question of the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we agree with Westcott, who says that "the confession of ignorance is really the confirmation of an inspiring faith. We acknowledge the Divine authority of the Epistle, self-attested and ratified by the illuminated consciousness of the Christian society; we measure what would have been our loss if it had not been included in our Bible; and we confess that the wealth of spiritual power was so great that he who was empowered to commit to writing this view of the fulness of the Truth has not by that conspicuous service even left his name for the grateful reverence of later ages. It was enough that the faith and the love were there to minister to the Lord (Matt. xxvi. 13)."

The Epistle was written for and addressed to Hebrew Christians, who appear to have been inhabitants of some particular city or region (Heb. xiii. 23), and to have formed an organised Society or Church which had existed some time. They had enjoyed the ministry of pastors who had been removed by death (xiii. 7), but now were subject to teachers whom they are exhorted to obey.

The general assumption has been that they were resident in Jerusalem or Cæsarea. Some have thought that Alexandria was their home; others have looked at Rome as being the "temporal city" in which these Hebrew Christians were residing.

ITS DATE.

Neither can we tell with exactness at what date the Epistle was written. It is generally agreed that it was written near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, and probably only a few years before it, perhaps between A.D. 64 and 67. It is hardly likely that the Jewish War, which commenced in the year 67, could have taken place, or even have commenced, without some covert reference to it in the Epistle. On the other hand, there are allusions to a forthcoming day of trial (x. 25, xii. 4, xiii. 13), with regard to which the Christians are exhorted in the light of the New Covenant to be faithful and true.

ITS PURPOSE.

It is thought that the Hebrew Christians to whom the Epistle was addressed contained a strong Gentile element. This supports our view that a nucleus of these Hebrew Christians were redeemed Israelites, to whom the Old Covenant originally belonged, and to whom the New Covenant more particularly applied (viii.). The Epistle is therefore a wonderful thesis upon the work of Christ's redemption, seen in the light of Israel's past, present, and future history, not only as viewed through the microscope of the Old Testament and Levitical rites and sacrifices, but as visualised through the telescope of the Cross, and confirmed through "the blood of the everlasting Covenant" (xiii. 20).

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (II.).

WE have seen that the earliest title of this Epistle was simply "To Hebrews," and that the present title, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, as found in both the A.V. and the R.V., lacks authority.

The fact that the Revised Version retains the same title gives no proof that the revisers considered it to be correct, for in their *Preface to the Revised New Testament*, they have been careful to add: "We may in the last place notice one particular to which we were not expressly directed to extend our revision, namely, the titles of the books of the New Testament. These titles are no part of the original text; and the titles found in the most ancient manuscripts are of too short a form to be convenient for use. Under these circumstances, we have deemed it best to leave unchanged the titles which are given in the Authorised Version as printed in 1611."

We now pass from the subject of the anonymity of the author to consider the destination of the Epistle, and thereby to satisfy our reverent curiosity as to the identity of "the Hebrews."

Here, then, let us point out that the Epistle does not claim to be addressed to "the Jews." *If the writer wrote to "the Jews," he would have said so.* No matter how the original title may have been altered, or added to, there is no doubt but that all the original MSS. and Versions (both Eastern and Western) claim that the Epistle was addressed to *the Hebrews*. What, then, is the difference between Hebrew and Jew, and,

it may be asked, how do these terms connote ideas different from the meaning of Israelite? Let us explain.

HEBREW.

This word occurs in the New Testament with a double meaning. It may refer to language (Acts vi. 1), and it may refer to descent (2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5). To this day the word may be used in either sense. It comes from the name Eber, who was the great-grandson of Shem (Genesis x. 21-31, xi. 14-26), and signifies "the other side," "across." The Hebrews were therefore those who came from "the other side of the river (Euphrates)," *i.e.*, from Haran (Gen. xi. 31; cf. Joshua xxiv. 2, 3). Sayce has, however, suggested that the word is of Babylonian origin, and denoted originally the "traders" who went to and fro across the Euphrates. Gradually the word "Hebrew" began to denote the descendants of Abraham, as distinguished from foreigners, and as such was sometimes used by foreigners themselves (Gen. xxxix. 14). The name "Hebrews" did not originally convey the meaning of the chosen people, but was simply a national term limited to the twelve tribes.

JEW.

This word is really a contraction of or corruption from *Judah*, and came into use at the time of the Babylonian exile, and therefore late in the days of Old Testament history. In all probability it was not used in its national sense until that period, for Josephus (*Ant.* xi. 5, 7) says: "So the Jews prepared for the work: that is the name they are called by from the day that they came up from Babylon, which is taken from the tribe of Judah, which came first to these places, and thence both they and the country gained that appellation" (*i.e.*, Judæa). But the first Old Testament writer to use

the term is Jeremiah, who prophesied from about B.C. 626-586 (xxxii. 12, etc.), who thus describes the people of the kingdom of Judah. It then occurs in 2 Kings xvi. 6, xxv. 25, as the name distinctive of the members of the southern kingdom who returned from Babylon after their 70 years' exile, whose descendants we still know to-day as Jews.

In the New Testament *Ἰουδαῖος* (Jew) is the name of the people as forming a religious commonwealth. St. John regards the Jews as being those who stood apart from Christ, and represented the nation from the side of unbelief. It refers only to the descendants of those who returned from the Babylonian exile, and in no case refers to the Ten Tribes, or their descendants. That is why the Galilæans are never called Jews in the Gospels, for, as we have seen previously, they, including the twelve disciples, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and were therefore Israelites and not Jews. Hence St. John, who gives the Jerusalem Ministry of the Lord more than the Galilæan, mentions the word Jew sixty-four times to the eight times in which the word is mentioned by the Synoptists, who give the Galilæan Ministry.

ISRAELITE.

This name is the name of special privilege, coming from the name which God gave to Jacob when He called him Israel. It is the birthright name of Jacob and his birthright seed, and denotes the children of promise, who were the recipients of the covenant blessings, and whom Christ came to redeem by the Incarnation and Atonement.

Of these three words it will be seen, therefore, that the Epistle is addressed to the first. It is not addressed to the Jews or to converted Jews, but "to the Hebrews." While it may be said that all Jews are Hebrews, it is by no means true to say that all Hebrews are Jews. The

Epistle is addressed to a circle larger than that embraced by the term "Jews." It is addressed to the redeemed and converted descendants of Abraham, whether they be Israelites or Jews. In other words, it is addressed to redeemed Israelites, in which category there was undoubtedly classified a large number of converted Jews, since we know from the Acts and the Epistles that the Apostles always sought the conversion of the Jews first.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is, then, the only Epistle which definitely addresses the Israelites or Hebrews in relation to their lineal descent from Abraham. To this end it does not approach the Hebrews either from the point of view of New Testament Judaism, or from the aspect of Israel Gentilised amongst the nations. It sees Israel as the Covenant people of the Old Testament dispensation, to whom appertained the law, the prophets, the sacrifices, and above all the priesthood. It carries no reference to any admixture of heathen converts in the society of Christian Hebrews, to whom the author is writing, for he is indeed writing to a definite society or group of Hebrew Christians, as he hopes to be restored to them personally (xiii. 19). Yet through his individual readers he radiates a message to scattered Israel, to whom belonged a historic and religious past, and a glorious and Christian future.

ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST.

No other Epistle presents such a picture of early Christian life drawn in minutest detail; no other Epistle inspires such a radiant hope in Christ, the eternal High Priest, in forthcoming times of persecution and external hostility. The Epistle pronounces the doom of Judaism, and predicts the transcendent universality of the Christian hope. To do this it proves that the Old Covenant was imperfect and transitory, and that the New Covenant is complete and abiding. The Old

Covenant was the shadow of which the New Covenant is the substance. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins, whereas Christ offered one Sacrifice for sins, and for ever sat down on the right hand of God. Not that the New Covenant abolished the Old Covenant, but rather that it fulfilled it.

THE SAME JESUS.

The Epistle, therefore, distinguishes between Christianity and Leviticalism, and by contrast exalts the Person of Christ as the Son of God, in comparison with those who have gone before. Thus we have in the light of Israel redeemed the contrast between (a) Christ and the Prophets (i. 1-3); (b) Christ and the angels (i. 4-14); (c) Christ and Moses (iii. 1-6); (d) Christ and Melchisedec (vii. 1—ix. 28). The glory of the Epistle is the absolute majesty and eternity of Christ seen in the efficacy of His Priesthood and Sacrifice. It upholds the all-sufficiency of Christ, the greatness and completeness of the salvation which He offers (ii. 3, ix. 26-28), the transcendent excellence of the New Covenant made in His blood (viii. 6, xiii. 10), the glory and stability of the Kingdom which He has founded (xii. 22-28), and the “great recompence of reward” which fidelity to Him will ensure (x. 35). Thus we are instructed to be “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith,” for Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”

Thus is the greatness of Israel's redemption coincident with the absolute glory of the Eternal Christ. He, in His Divine Person greater than earthly prophet, priest, or king, has embodied in Himself the union of the Covenants, and has wedded to Himself the Israel of time and eternity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

WE now come to a survey of the Catholic Epistles, as they have been called since the second century. These are the seven Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude. From an early period in the history of the Church these Epistles were dealt with as a class by themselves. Nor is this surprising when consideration is taken of the fact that, as a class, the Catholic Epistles have a character which readily distinguishes them from the Pauline Epistles and from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Whereas they are all letters, they differ the one from the other considerably in epistolary form; 1 John, for example, being more of a pastoral, and James having more of a sapiential nature. Yet they have some obvious points of affinity with each other. James and 1 Peter resemble one another, as do also 2 Peter and Jude, while these seven Epistles have some remarkable coincidences, not only with other New Testament books, but also with certain non-canonical writings of early date.

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES.

The order of the Catholic Epistles varies in the ancient MSS., versions, and catalogues. The order in which they stand in our English Bible is that in which they are found in the most ancient documents. But the *Apostolic Canons*, Augustine (*De Doctr. Christ.* ii. 12) and other early authorities place them in quite a different order, while some ancient MSS., versions, and catalogues, give them a different place in the New

Testament, the usual position, other than that in which we find them placed in our Bible, being between the Acts and the Pauline Epistles.

These letters are called Catholic Epistles (ἐπιστολαὶ καθολικαί) by the early Fathers. The term *Catholic* originated in the Eastern Church, and in process of time became a technical term, used to designate that group of Epistles which had to be distinguished from the Pauline Epistles (including the Epistle to the Hebrews) and the Revelation. It therefore lost its primary meaning, which, from its etymology, signifies "general." This group of Epistles was regarded as being Catholic or "general," because none of them was addressed to Churches or individuals, as in the case of the other Epistles.

But, as a matter of fact, the term *Catholic* was not limited by the early Fathers to these seven Epistles, although it was not applied to any other New Testament books. It was also employed of certain non-canonical books. Origen, for example (*Contra Celsum*, i. 63) applied the term to the famous Epistle of Barnabas. However, in the fourth century we find the word used by Eusebius (*H.E.* ii. 23, vi. 14) of the seven Epistles, and from that period the term became definitely established. Strangely enough the Western Church gradually appended another title to these Epistles, and called them *Canonicæ* (canonical); nor is it easy to explain how the title *Canonicæ* took the place of *Catholicæ* in one half of the Christian communion. It has been suggested that it was due to some mistake. "By a singular error," says Westcott (*The Epistles of St. John*, p. xxix.), "the group of letters was called in the later Western Church *canonical* (canonicæ), in place of *catholic*."

Finally, it may be said that the title "catholic" had from the beginning its original sense of "general"; that it was used to designate letters of the character of

circular or encyclical Epistles; that in this sense it was applied to writings both within and without the literature of the New Testament from the end of the second century, first of all to individual members of the group, and from the fourth century (Eusebius) to the seven Epistles as a class distinguishable from the Pauline Epistles. Later on other ideas became connected with its meaning, and its use became less constant, until, in the sixth century, the term "Catholic," when applied to the Epistles, became identical with "canonical" in the Western Church, thus assuming a more dogmatic character.

JAMES, THE LORD'S BROTHER.

There are at least three different persons in the New Testament bearing the name James, *i.e.*, *James the son of Zebedee* (sometimes called the Great), *James the son of Alphæus*, and *James the brother of the Lord*. Of these it is the third—James the Lord's brother—who is the author of this Epistle.

The English name James is derived, through the Italian *Giacomo*, from the Ἰάκωβος of the Greek Testament. Nowhere in the Epistle itself does the author tell us of his relationship to our Lord. He speaks of himself as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," a fact which intensifies the validity of his identity, and the authenticity of the Epistle, for had the latter been pseudonymous, the writer would have taken pains to establish the position of the James whose authority he wished to claim. Further, the fact that St. James omits any reference to his being our Lord's brother is a sign of modesty, in the same way that St. John makes no mention of his own name as the writer of the Fourth Gospel. St. James displays a consciousness of authority; he expected to be listened to, and, as the first Bishop of Jerusalem, knew that the mere

mention of his name would command attention among "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad."

He was brought up in the sanctity of the Nazareth home, where he learned from early childhood the precepts and practices of the Jewish faith, to whose principles of devoutness and obedience he clung in after years as a Christian bishop (Acts xv.), although he was ever ready to grant the fullest liberty and toleration to those converts who had never been Jews by religion.

BISHOP OF JERUSALEM.

But he was not an early believer in the Divinity and Messiahship of Christ, nor was he one of the twelve disciples. He does not seem to have been converted until after the Resurrection, when he received a special vision of the risen Lord, which convinced him (1 Cor. xv. 7). He then became head of the Church at Jerusalem, in which capacity there are three references to him in the New Testament:—

(i.) Three years after his conversion, St. Paul went up to Jerusalem and stayed a fortnight with St. Peter; there he saw no other Apostles "save James the Lord's brother" (Gal. i. 18, 19).

(ii.) Fourteen years later St. Paul went up to Jerusalem again; this was on the occasion of the historic council over which St. James presided, and when such important decisions were come to regarding the non-Jewish Christians, and the terms of their admittance into the Christian Church (Acts xv. 4-29; Gal. ii. 1-10). The influence and authority of St. James, and the prominence of his outstanding personality, are clearly defined in the record of this famous conference.

(iii.) In his return from the Third Missionary Journey we find St. Paul again at Jerusalem, reporting to St. James "what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry" (Acts xxi. 18, 19). Thus have we another illustration of the seniority of St. James,

and of the importance of his position, including the recognition of the same by St. Paul and the elders.

HIS MARTYRDOM.

Little more of him is known from the Bible, except that he was evidently married (1 Cor. ix. 5). But further particulars are supplied by Josephus, and by Hege-sippus, the famous ecclesiastical historian. The latter, quoted by Eusebius (*H.E.* ii. 23), pictures James as being an ascetic and a Nazarite, and names him as the "Just," to distinguish him from others of the same name. But Josephus (*Ant.* XX. ix. 1) gives a more reliable account of the martyrdom of St. James, stating that the high priest charged "James the brother of Jesus, who is called the Christ," and some others before the court of the Sanhedrim, with breaking the laws, and delivered them over to be stoned. Eusebius (*H.E.* vii. 19) relates that the episcopal chair or "throne" (*θρόνος*) of St. James was still shown in Jerusalem in his day (fourth century).

THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle is probably one of the earliest writings in the New Testament, a fact which may account for its Judaic tone. It is written for and addressed to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion. The vast majority of its readers were Israelites, and here we notice that many commentaries are wrong in stating that St. James wrote to "all Jews scattered throughout the world," or that the Epistle was addressed "to the believing Jews of the Dispersion." St. James had in mind the covenant seed of Abraham, of which only one-twelfth were Jews, and it is of importance that this fact be not overlooked.

But the Epistle is nevertheless Judaic in tone. James, as we have seen, had never renounced the groundwork of his Jewish faith, although he became wholly Christ-

ian. He was not a Galilæan by birth, as were the eleven disciples, nor was he a Benjamite, as was St. Paul. He belonged to the royal tribe of Judah, as did his Divine Brother, and consequently it is not surprising that he should see and teach the doctrines of the Christian Faith through Judaic spectacles. He teaches the full Gospel of Christianity, but nevertheless believes in the Law, not in its Mosaic bearing, but as transformed by the Gospel. Christ is only twice mentioned by name (i. 1, ii. 21), and there is no direct reference to His death or resurrection, nor are the Incarnation and Atonement mentioned, although the fact of them is implied throughout.

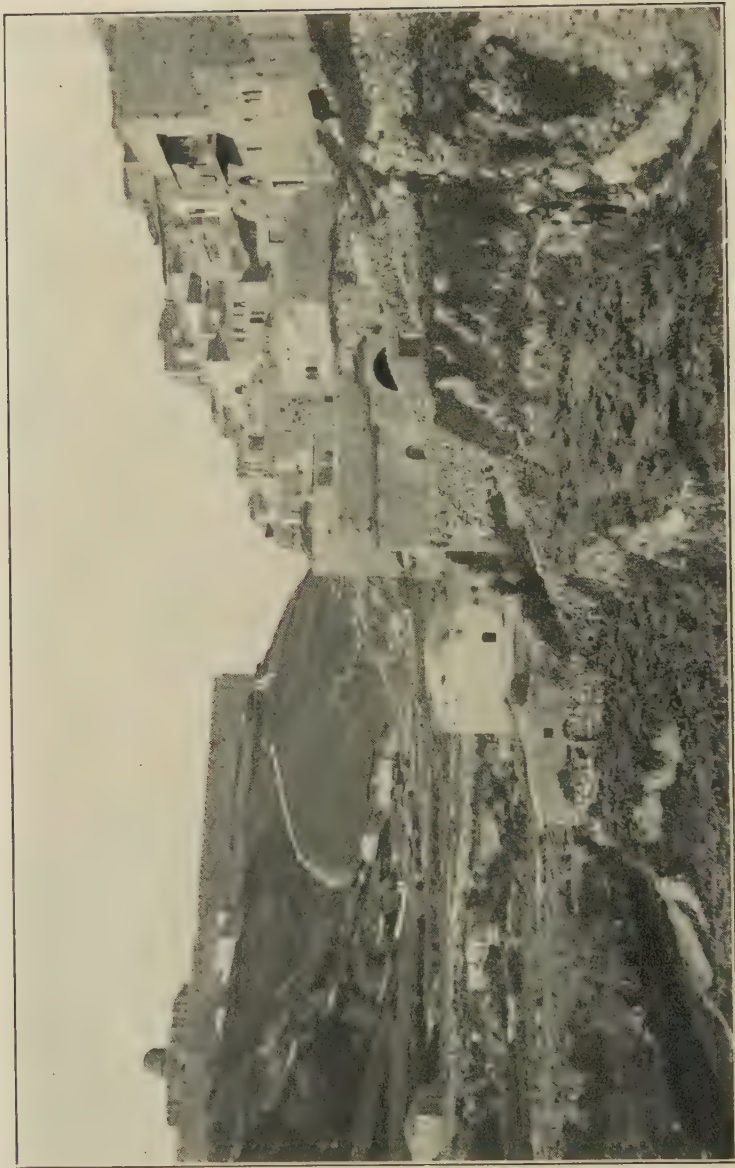
ITS PRACTICAL ETHICS.

The Epistle is eminently *practical*; it upholds a side of life which is only too often forgotten, and that is that Christianity is nothing if not practical in ethics, and influential in the daily life. It encourages consistency of life, and gives great prominence to the value of faith and prayer. It warns against the dangers of speech, of riches, of strife, and of worldliness. It therefore describes the nature of true religion, and exposes the hypocrisy of him who pretends to have faith and yet whose works belie his words. In this way the teaching of St. James is complementary to that of St. Paul. The latter taught that "works without faith are dead," the former that "faith without works is dead." Thus there is no contradiction, but a harmonious antithesis.

The Letter insists on righteousness, and in a Judaistic sense praises wisdom and poverty, while its style frequently recalls that of Proverbs, and so savours of the wisdom literature of previous centuries. There are close resemblances between the Epistle and our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, nor need we be surprised at this familiarity with our Lord's language when we bear in mind that St. James was one of the Lord's brethren.

St. James employs a great variety of vocabulary; in fact, he uses some 70 words which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament. He is fond of metaphors from nature, even as our Lord taught by parables; and a poetic element runs through the Epistle, the sign of a cultured and thoughtful mind, as reverent as it is practical.

We to-day who are descended from "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" would do well to take this beautiful Epistle to heart, to study deeply its teaching, and to emulate the practical application of its Christian doctrines.



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THE CITY OF DAVID (ZION).

ANCIENT JERUSALEM.

SILOAM.

REV. G. H. LANCASTER.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ST. PETER.

SIMON PETER is without doubt one of the most interesting characters in the New Testament.

His forceful personality exceeded that of the other disciples, as his vigorous, querulous, impulsive, yet generous, temperament eclipsed that of his compeers. He was always so intensely human—human in his boastfulness, human in his loyalty, human in his weakness, human in his strength. And because he was so wholly human he let nothing hinder him in his ardent love and affection for the Lord. There is, after all, something to be said for the words of St. Augustine that “if John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, Peter was the disciple who loved Jesus.”

Simon was the son of Jonah or John (Matt. xvi. 17; John i. 42, xxi. 15-17, R.V.). His first name is the Greek form of the old patriarchal name of Simeon, by which latter he was also known, as we gather, for example, from the opening words of James' presidential address at the first Jerusalem Council (Acts xv. 14). He was a native of Bethsaida, a small but important fishing town, which in all probability may be equated with the modern et-Tell, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, east of the Jordan. But at the time when the story of the Gospel opens he lived with his wife, his mother-in-law, and his brother Andrew, at Capernaum (Mark i. 29-31; Matt. viii. 14, 15; Luke iv. 38, 39). Simon and Andrew were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. iv. 18; Luke v. 7, 11), where they worked in

partnership with James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Luke v. 7, 11; Matt. iv. 21).

HIS CALL.

Simon first met with Jesus at Bethabara, beyond Jordan (John i. 28, R.V., Bethany), where John was baptising. A great revival was taking place under the Baptist's ministry, and not a few Galilæans whose minds were receptive to the fulfilment of prophecy were participating in it, including Andrew and Simon (John i. 35-42). In all probability St. John the Evangelist was the other (unnamed) disciple of the Baptist who, with Andrew, heard the blessed words "Behold the Lamb of God," and then "followed Jesus." Simon at that moment was not present, presumably being away fishing. But Andrew fetched him and said, "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." Thereupon "he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him He said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone." From that moment he was a disciple of the Lord. But as Jesus gazed into Simon's soul He foresaw in him a great moral and spiritual strength, which at the time was lying latent, undeveloped.

Foreseeing what the discipline of Divine grace would work in him, Jesus prophetically anticipated Simon's future Apostleship, and called him "Cephas," which is the Aramaic for "rock" or "stone," the equivalent of Πέτρος, "Peter." As yet Simon had not earned his new name, for he was always impulsive, ever vacillating, yet always affectionate. During the months of discipleship he was commonly known by his old name of Simon (Matt. xvii. 25; Mark xiv. 37; Luke xxii. 31), sometimes with his father's name added (Matt. xvi. 17; John i. 42, xxi. 15). His new name was given him in trust at that early time as an incentive to greater love, to future

Apostleship. But it took months of daily fellowship with the Lord to inculcate in him that spirit of genuine discipleship which visibly changed the old Simon into the new Peter. In the daily contemplation of His acts and words, both in public and in private, lay the real significance of his spiritual training and development. It was not the influence of any theological schools that convinced Simon; it was the daily and weekly contact with Jesus that wrought the mighty change, without which the Apostolic Church—nay, the Church of God through all time—would have lost one of its mightiest teachers, and one of its greatest Apostles.

HIS CONFESSION.

There were two occasions on which the transition or development in Simon's life became evidenced. The first was when he made the memorable confession regarding Christ's Divinity (Matt. xvi. 13-20). Voluntarily did Simon reply to the question of Jesus, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?"—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." His confession was an inspired one, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." This is the only time when our Lord pronounced a beatitude on an individual, and it marks the intrinsic importance of the occasion. So momentous and weighty was his confession that the Lord continued, "Thou art Peter (πέτρος), and upon this rock (πέτρα) I will build My Church." The latter words "My Church" (μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν) must be understood in the light of Peter's confession of faith. It means the Church of redeemed Israel, *the true Israel of God*, the Israelitish Church of the Old and the New Covenants, unified in Christ, which would be understood by faith, recognised by hope, and propagated by love. Hence our Lord reminded Simon of the early days of his call, when he received the new name of Cephas, emphasising

it with the Greek form *Peter*, in recognition of his faith by confession of Christ's Messiahship.

It is of paramount importance to observe that Christ claimed for Himself the prerogative of authority. He alone is the Builder of the Church, neither did Christ give to St. Peter any functional rights greater than those granted to the other Apostles. In fact, it was St. James, as we have seen in the previous chapter, who was president of the first Christian Council, and who was the first Christian bishop in the Church of God, and who, therefore, took precedence over the other Apostles. Why, then, it may be asked, did our Lord thus regard St. Peter as the foundation of the new Israel, and apparently grant unto him such extended privileges? Many answers have been given to this, which has been not unnaturally treated as a profound problem by others than those who see the solution in the dogmas of the Church of Rome. We believe that the reason lies in the fact that *Peter was the first thus to confess Christ*, and that his confession marked a new era or turning-point in the education of the twelve disciples. Similarly he was the first to preach the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost, when three thousand living stones were laid on the foundation of the Cross of Christ. Our Lord then called Simon "Peter," to mark his prominent and personal position in the building of the Church of Christ, but it will be noticed that the promise of "binding" and "loosing," which was first of all given to St. Peter, was later on given to all the disciples (Matt. xviii. 18), just as the promise of the "remitting" and the "retaining" of sins was given to the ten Apostles at eventide on the Resurrection Day.

HIS CONVERSION.

The confession of faith to which we have just made brief allusion was largely an intellectual and prophetic conclusion to which Simon Peter had arrived. But it

lacked personal conviction and heart conversion, as is deduced from subsequent events, when Peter failed to understand the purpose of Christ's mission. If he, with James and John, had to a limited extent understood the revelation of Christ as *Life* through the parables and miracles, it is doubtful whether they appreciated Him as *Glory* in the Transfiguration. In fact, until the trial of Jesus, the impulsiveness of Peter prevented him from taking the living Christ at His word, and from believing that the mystery both of our Lord's Incarnation and of His works (John xiii. 7) would be solved to his unveiled vision at an opportune time. Hence at the most critical of moments in the agony before the Cross, Peter's intellectual and prophetic confession of faith was not strong enough to overcome his lack of personal faith, *and he denied his Lord*.

But this, which was his greatest failure, proved to be his greatest triumph. His denial of Christ caused him to see that the Lord was his Saviour; and the steadfast look of Jesus, which brought tears of sorrow and repentance to the fallen disciple, led to his genuine conversion. Now he believed with a contrite heart, and the seed already sown sprang up through the Resurrection into Apostolic fruitfulness, making him worthy of his new-found name, so that he could write by experience, "unto you, therefore, which believe, He is precious."

HIS CONSECRATION.

One final step awaits our notice. The Incarnation and Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ changed Simon, the Galilæan fisherman, into Peter, the honest-hearted believer in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. But the Day of Pentecost completed the change. To be converted is one thing; to be consecrated is another. On that great day, therefore, Peter became filled with the Holy Ghost, and for the

rest of his years, the years of fruitful ministry and Apostolic service, St. Peter was wholly subject to the Indwelling Spirit of God. No longer was he an impulsive doubter; no longer was he an impetuous amateur. Henceforth he was "all for Jesus," passionate in His love for Christ and for souls, for a long while the partner of St. John, for time and eternity the consecrated disciple of his Risen Lord.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

IT was not, as we have seen, until after the Resurrection of Christ, and the giving of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, that Simon Peter entered into the fulness of the Christian Faith. His conversion was not a sudden one; it was a gradual awakening, a progressive enlightenment. The unveiling of Jesus of Nazareth as Israel's Messiah and Redeemer caused a revolution of ideas in the mind of Simon, so that the concomitant circumstances connected with our Lord's Passion and Resurrection caused that evolution of thought in his soul which enabled him to understand to the full so much of that which had previously been enigmatical and perplexing. In fact, his final conviction sprang from the sight of the Lord's grave-clothes lying by themselves in the empty tomb, actually preserving the shape and form of our Lord's body, just as the latter had passed through them without His taking them off and folding them up. This similar fact convinced John also on that memorable morning—"and he saw and believed."

PETER'S MISSIONARY TRAVELS.

Of Peter's subsequent history not a great deal is known. It is generally thought that after his visit to Antioch (Gal. ii. 11) he remained at Jerusalem for some years, and then visited Syria and probably Pontus, Galatia, Asia, and Bithynia, which countries are mentioned as containing the dispersed Israelites to whom he wrote the Epistle (1 Peter i. 1). As is well known

Roman tradition teaches that St. Peter laboured for twenty-five years in the city of Rome. It is quite probable that he may have gone to Rome at the end of his life, but it is quite impossible that he could have been there for twenty-five years, nor was he ever Bishop of Rome. It is a disputed point whether he was martyred (John xxi. 18, 19) in Rome or in Babylon, although it is generally agreed that he was put to death in Nero's reign in the persecutions excited by that Emperor.

THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON.

Much dispute has also arisen over the identity of Babylon (1 Peter v. 13). Three solutions have been offered:—

- (a) Babylon in Egypt, mentioned by Strabo (XVII. i. 30, etc.).
- (b) Babylon on the Euphrates.
- (c) Rome.

Of these the most likely solution is the first or the third. It is quite likely that St. Peter may have preached in Mesopotamia, nor is there any reason for assuming that when he said Babylon he meant any city or locality other than the site of the time-honoured city on the Euphrates. A prolonged sojourn in Babylonia would certainly account for the absence of any reference to St. Peter preaching or dwelling at Rome in the Epistles of St. Paul. But in favour of the third solution it must be mentioned that in sub-apostolic days Babylon became a symbolic word for Rome, the idolatrous and persecuting oppressor of the true Israel of God. As such it has not been unusual since the days of Jerome to regard the Babylon of the Revelation (xiv. 8, xvi. 19, xvii. 5, xviii. 2, 10, 21) as symbolical of Rome when its destruction is foretold, because of its sins, and especially because of its persecution. Eusebius (*H.E.* ii. 15)

supports this view also, and regards the Babylon of St. Peter as being another name for Rome, drawing attention to the fact that St. Mark is mentioned, whereas we know that he was the amanuensis of Peter (says Papias, quoted by Eusebius, *H.E.* iii. 39), and that St. Paul summoned him to Rome (2 Tim. iv. 11).

STILL UNSOLVED.

Again, if there be no evidence that there ever was a Christian Church at Babylon on the Euphrates, or that there was a sufficiently developed colony of dispersed Israelites in Mesopotamia to warrant the view that St. Peter laboured there, there is likewise insufficient evidence to show that Rome was called by the mystical name of Babylon in a period as early as that of the Apostolic age itself. We are left therefore in complete uncertainty regarding this vexed question, in spite of the fact that weighty names may be produced in favour of each theory, including Salmon, Farrar and Ramsay, who favour Rome, and Calvin, Lightfoot and Alford, who lean to the geographical Babylon.

A GLORIOUS EPISTLE.

The Epistle breathes, perhaps more than any other Epistle, the actual and personal influence of Jesus Christ. It is written by one whose whole life was dominated and sweetened by the Spirit of Christ. Its principles are those of *faith, obedience, and patience*. It delineates an overflowing Christian life, rich in evangelical thought, founded on the example, death, and resurrection of the Messiah. Through it all there percolates an overwhelming love for the risen Christ, and a profound conviction in the truth of the Gospel, which alone can keep the Christian believer from the danger of lapsing (even through suffering) into the unholy life of the surrounding heathen.

St. Peter therefore recalls the fact of the resurrection of Christ, and seeks to awaken in the hearts of his readers a new faith and hope in God by appealing to the example of Christ's sufferings. He reminds them of the significance of their Israelitish origin, for they are "a chosen generation" (1 Peter ii. 9; Deut. x. 15), "a royal priesthood" (Exod. xix. 5, 6), "an holy nation," "a peculiar people" (Deut. iv. 20). Thus the author bespeaks for the Church its ancient prerogatives now achieved and fulfilled through the redemption. Of what people other than Israel can it be said that they are "a royal priesthood"? What other nation has from its infancy been exhorted to be "a holy nation"? What nation other than Israel, having once obtained mercy and then having been divorced from the Covenant, has once again come into the channel of obtaining mercy? Of whom was Hosea speaking if he was not prophesying about Israel, exiled for many centuries, and then redeemed, restored, and revived through Christ?

ISRAEL'S RESPONSIBILITY.

And so it is Israel that has to show forth the virtues of the Christian life. The believer is begotten unto a living hope through the Resurrection, "unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (1 Peter i. 4). Israel has to show forth that new life which springs from the seed of "the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter i. 23). Holiness is the quality of the life of the redeemed, involving separation from fleshly lusts, self-control under suffering, and joy in the present salvation, which is to be not unmixed with the future hope of an incorruptible inheritance. Thus remembering the significance of his own name, *Peter*, and recalling the words of our Lord at his confession of faith (Matt. xvi. 16-19), the Apostle shows that Christ

is *the* living stone, and that each believing Israelite is *a* living stone, built into that spiritual temple in which the brethren are the royal priesthood, the true Israel of God, "a brotherhood which is God's home on earth."

The Epistle is full of practical precepts, upholding the glorious character of Christian salvation. The latter has to maintain a standard, both pure and honourable in the sight of the heathen, which gains by suffering. Suffering becomes a blessing to those who if they suffer in the cause of God "commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (iv. 19).

THE LORD'S RETURN.

It closes with an appeal to the elders to be thoughtful in their ministry, and to the younger Christians to be mindful of youthful snares. It heralds the joy of the Lord's return, Who, as the Chief Shepherd, shall, when He appears, reward the faithful with "the crown of glory that fadeth not away." To those who are looking for the coming of the Lord this Epistle has therefore a special message. It regulates the conduct of Christian life, and endears the presence of Jesus to the love of the Christian heart. It cherishes humility in character and watchfulness in prayer, and so enforces the spiritual heritage of Israel, the redeemed of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

MUCH controversy has centred around the authorship of what we regard as the Second Epistle General of Peter. From earliest days it has been a matter of doubt and dispute as to whether St. Peter wrote the Epistle or not. The earliest Christian writers make no reference to this Letter, nor can it be traced as being known until the third century. Differences in tone and style from the First Epistle have caused its genuineness to be questioned by commentators such as Calvin, Erasmus, Farrar and Chase. But, on the other hand, it is gratifying to relate that the majority of commentators, including such authorities as Alford, Plummer, Cook, and Salmon, regard and accept the Epistle as being the genuine work of St. Peter.

ITS AUTHORSHIP.

The author claims that he is "Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ." This is a big claim to make if not a genuine one. We know that it was the custom in Apostolic days, and in the period immediately following, for writers to issue letters and epistles under the name and title of various Apostles. Westcott (*On the Canon of the New Testament*, Appendix B) has shown that many spurious compositions were being circulated abroad under the name of the Apostles. But in spite of the fact that there are many internal points of difference between these two Epistles,

it cannot be denied that there is a very great resemblance between them, and we see no reason for denying the Petrine authorship of this work.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

When we compare the actual words of both Epistles very carefully we find that there is a close internal evidence to show that the same hand penned each of them. Similarly it may be pointed out that the language in the Second Epistle is of the same kind and character as that which is ascribed to St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles. A good example of this is to be found in the use of the word *obtained* where the same Greek verb is used in either case, but nowhere else in the New Testament (Acts i. 17, ἔλαχε; cf. 2 Peter i. 1, λαχοῦσι). Also the Greek word ἐνσέβεια, translated "godliness" (R.V.), and "holiness" (A.V.) in Peter's speech at the Beautiful Gate (Acts iii. 12), is the same as that used in the Epistle (i. 7), in either case the meaning being that of a potentiality in exercise which will make its possessor fruitful in good works. Perhaps one of the most interesting cases in which the same words are used occurs in the passage where St. Peter speaks of Judas buying a piece of ground with *the reward of iniquity*, compared with the description in the Epistle of those who followed the unrighteousness of Balaam. The same Greek words are used in either case (Acts i. 18; 2 Peter i. 13, 15) with only a slight variation, the point being that these words are found nowhere else in the New Testament.

There are also evidences of close resemblance between this Epistle and those parts of the Gospels which either in narrative or association are connected with St. Peter. Particularly is this so in the case of St. Mark's Gospel, it being remembered that St. Mark was the amanuensis of St. Peter, and his interpreter. An ex-

ample of this is found in the use of the word $\lambda α ῖ λ α ψ$ for storm, which only occurs twice in the Bible (Mark iv. 37; 2 Peter ii. 17).

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

But the most striking instance of resemblance is to be found in the reference to the Transfiguration. It was St. Peter himself who used the word *tabernacles* on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark ix. 5), and it is evidential of his authorship that he should write "as long as I am in this tabernacle," etc., in the same chapter as that in which a reference is made to the actual Transfiguration itself (2 Peter i. 13-18). Further, after alluding to his own death, the author of this Epistle uses the actual word $\epsilon ξ ο δ ο ν$, meaning "exodus" or "departure," which St. Luke (ix. 31) uses when he writes "Who appeared in glory and spake of his *decease* (departure)." This link with the Transfiguration suggests that the author of the Epistle was none other than St. Peter, who himself had been a witness of the Transfiguration, and whose whole life and ministry were coloured and changed by the glory of that event.

We are therefore right in believing in the Petrine authorship of this Epistle, whatever objections may be urged against it.

ISRAEL'S INHERITANCE.

The zeal of the Epistle lies in its passion for righteousness. It makes a loud appeal for godly living and personal faith in the existence of the Gospel, the Scripture, and the Christian conscience. St. Peter is writing to the same group of believers as that to which he sent the first Epistle (2 Peter iii. 1). He is therefore writing to "the elect (Israel) who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia"

(1 Peter i. 1, R.V.). Here we may pause to suggest the thought that if Peter went to Babylon, and, as we know, wrote to the dispersed Israelites east of the Ægean, the redemption of Israel was propagated in the West by St. Paul, and in the East by St. Peter, while St. James wrote "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," both East and West. In this way did scattered Israel come into the inheritance of the Gospel.

CONTENTS.

The Epistle may be divided into four parts :—

(1) *Salutation and Exhortation* (i. 1-11). This beautiful opening gives an encouragement to faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. It guarantees an entrance into God's kingdom through the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ unto the forgiveness of sins.

(2) *The certainty of faith* (i. 12-21). St. Peter being a disciple of the Lord and an eye-witness of the Transfiguration insists upon the confirmation of prophecy through the influence of the Holy Ghost, who alone will give the interpretation.

(3) *Warning against false teachers* (ii.). An invasion of false teachers is predicted. They will pervert the Gospel, and cause apostasy in the Church. But God is righteous, Who will punish them as He spared not the angels that sinned, and condemned the contemporaries of Noah, and the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then follows the terrible description of this great apostasy, and perhaps it were better for some had they never known the truth.

(4) *The Day of the Lord* (iii.). A warning against those who deny the coming of the Lord and the Day of Judgment. If the Lord is delaying His coming men have a longer opportunity for repentance. St. Peter backs up the Pauline doctrine of the Second Advent,

and warns his readers against wresting Scriptures unto their own destruction.

THE FINALE.

We have seen that the Second Epistle to Timothy was the last letter which St. Paul wrote before his martyrdom, and as such we treasure the swan-song of that aged Apostle. Here we have the last Letter of St. Peter, to whom the Risen Christ said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" And so "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee" may be written across this Epistle. It is full of righteous love for Christ, having holiness for its maxim. No wonder that St. Peter's last thought was "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," followed by the ascription "To Him be glory, both now and ever. Amen." It is a fitting termination to the sternest of Epistles, and an eloquent farewell from the most human of Apostles.

CHAPTER XL.

ST. JOHN.

ST. JOHN was the younger son of Zebedee, a master fisherman, with a thriving business at Bethsaida, on the Lake of Galilee. We are not specifically told so, but by placing certain verses together we may rightly assume that St. John's mother was Salome, one of those women "who, when He was in Galilee, followed Him and ministered unto Him," and that she was the sister of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1; cf. Matt. xxvii. 56, also John xix. 25). It will be seen, therefore, that St. John was, according to the flesh, first cousin of our Lord, whereas John the Baptist was presumably a second cousin (Luke i. 36). It is generally assumed that the Apostle was younger than the Lord, and perhaps the youngest of the twelve.

As has been mentioned above (p. 74), we know that Zebedee, the father of James and John, was well-to-do, because he was the head of an established firm, consisting of partners and employees (Luke v. 7, 10, also Mark i. 20); nor could St. John have been without means, as he was able to provide a home under his own roof (John xix. 27) in Jerusalem for our Lord's mother after the Crucifixion.

HIS BIRTH.

He was a Galilæan by birth, and his father was therefore, in all probability, a Benjamite. But his mother must have been of the House of David, so that he united in himself a double Israelitish descent through Benjamin and Judah. It was an advantage to St. John that he had a Galilæan bringing up, for he was in that

way freed from the narrow, limited, and bigoted teaching of the Rabbinic schools of the South. He was, before his conversion, a Jew by religion, but not by race, and therefore his relationship to Christ, combined with the natural enthusiasm of youth, enabled him, as a Galilæan, to believe in the Divinity of the Lord, perhaps three years before St. James, "the Lord's brother," could allow himself, owing to the obstacles of Judaism, to accept the Messiahship of Jesus.

HIS EDUCATION.

St. John received his education in one of those village schools which must have abounded around the Galilæan lake, in order to cope with the demand of what was, in those days, a large and industrious population. But he was not a university graduate as was St. Paul, for we are told that both Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts iv. 13), an expression in the Greek which, however, does not signify real ignorance so much as the lack of Rabbinic teaching. He was, on the other hand, deeply intellectual and far-seeing, being more of a visionary than a prophet, more of a student than a scholar. He spoke Aramaic, and was learned in the Hebrew Scriptures. But it is doubtful if he learned Greek until later in life, as the style of the Fourth Gospel is better than that of the Revelation, since he wrote the latter some years before he committed his Gospel to writing. This accounts for the fact that the Revelation is strongly Hebraic in its grammar, while the Gospel is written in excellent Hellenistic Greek. Yet the Hebraism of both volumes is sufficiently conspicuous to serve as useful evidence regarding their common origin and authorship.

HIS CALL.

St. John's call to discipleship did not originate until after the baptism of Christ. He was a kinsman of the

Baptist, and without doubt was one of the two disciples of the latter, the other disciple being Andrew (John i. 35-40). Thus, in accompanying Christ to His home—for Andrew and John “came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day”—he became a guest of Christ, and regarded the Lord no longer with the mere devotion of a cousin, but with the affectionate loyalty of a pupil to his Master, of a disciple to his Teacher. His call is related with the greatest fulness of detail by the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. iv. 21, 22; Mark i. 19, 20; Luke v. 8-11), and forthwith he, with Peter and James, occupy the inner circle of our Lord’s confidence and fellowship. The Divine summons to Andrew and Peter that they were to become “fishers of men” was not directly given to John, but it may be concluded that he was admitted to this intermediary stage between discipleship and Apostleship.

THE DISCIPLE OF LOVE.

Henceforth the Gospels are full of the discipleship of John. He was “the disciple whom Jesus loved (John xiii. 23, xix. 26, xx. 2, xxi. 7, 20, 24). Not that Jesus loved him more than He loved the others, but that St. John, who describes himself in that anonymous way, was always so conscious of the love of Jesus that he could, with amazement and humility (knowing that he was but a “son of thunder”), only think of himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loves.” As Westcott says, “it marks an acknowledgment of love, and not an exclusive enjoyment of love.” On three occasions, each of them of the greatest importance from the point of view of Apostolic training, the selected trio—Peter, James, and John—were, to the exclusion of the remaining disciples, allowed to be present with the Lord. These were the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark v. 37; Luke viii. 51); the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1; Mark

ix. 2; Luke ix. 28); and the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiv. 33.—N.B., Luke xxii. 39-46 does not mention the three disciples).

JAMES AND JOHN.

On two occasions the brothers James and John are associated together. Once when they desired our Lord's permission to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritan village, which had refused hospitality to their beloved Master (Luke ix. 51-56), and again when they (at the instigation of their mother Salome) came to Christ and besought, with loyal eagerness, that they might have the two choicest places in His Kingdom (Matt. xx. 20; Mark x. 35). Nor must this latter incident be misjudged; James and John were ready to welcome what would only be a prerogative of suffering. They were willing to be near Christ, even if it involved martyrdom (James, Acts xii. 2) or banishment (John to the Island of Patmos, Rev. i. 9).

PETER AND JOHN.

Only once in the Gospels is St. John individually associated with St. Peter, and that was on the occasion of the preparation for the Last Supper (Luke xxii. 8). This is the first time in which these two disciples, now wedded in their ministry by the Lord, work together, and it will be noticed that their fellowship in the Gospel was cemented after Pentecost, for we find them harnessed together in the early days of Apostleship—Peter healing and preaching, and John praying—until, at a later period, whose time and circumstances are unknown to us, St. John became Bishop of Ephesus, whereas St. Peter was evangelising eastwards.

PATMOS.

The New Testament is silent about the fruitful years of St. John's pastorate. But abundant evidence has

come down from the early fathers confirming the tradition that he went to Ephesus (after St. Paul's final departure), where his episcopacy lasted with age and honour until his home-call, towards the end of the first century. We know that he wrote the Apocalypse "in the isle that is called Patmos," whither he was banished from Ephesus "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. i. 9), but we have no record regarding the circumstances under which he wrote the Gospel, other than traditions such as that which Eusebius (*H.E.* vi. 14) quotes from Clement of Alexandria that "John, last [of the evangelists], when he saw that the outward facts had been set forth in the [existing] Gospels, impelled by his friends, Divinely moved by the Spirit, made a spiritual Gospel." (*πνευματικὸν ποιῆσαι Εὐαγγέλιον.*)

Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 18, 20) further states that during the persecution of Domitian "the Apostle and Evangelist John" was banished to Patmos, and that on the accession of Nerva (A.D. 96) he returned to Ephesus, where he took up his abode according to "an ancient Christian tradition."

BEAUTIFUL TRADITIONS.

Several beautiful stories have come down to us relating to the closing years of the Apostle's ministry. Jerome (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, vi. 10), tells us that when St. John "tarried at Ephesus to extreme old age, and could only with difficulty be carried to the church in the arms of his disciples, and was unable to give utterance to many words, he used to say no more at their several meetings than this: 'Little children, love one another.' At length the disciples and fathers who were there, wearied with hearing always the same words, said, 'Master, why dost thou always say this?' 'It is the Lord's command,'

was his worthy reply, 'and if this alone be done, it is enough.' " Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 23), quoting from Clement of Alexandria, speaks of another beautiful incident in the life of St. John, who once observed a young convert, and entrusted him to the bishop of the local church. But the young man fell from grace, became dissolute, and was neglected by the bishop. He became the captain of a gang of banditti. Later on the Apostle visited that locality again, and desired to see the young man, whom he had not forgotten. Hearing what had happened, St. John reprimanded the bishop, and searched in person for the thieves. The latter seized the Apostle, who begged to be taken to their captain. When the dissolute backslider saw St. John he endeavoured to speed away, but the love of the Apostle reclaimed him; and after going through a course of penance, the young man was restored to the communion of the Church, and stands recorded "as a most affecting and memorable example of the efficacy of a sincere repentance."

LIFE, LOVE, AND LIBERTY.

The all-absorbing passion of St. John's life was love, human and Divine. With this holy passion there was coupled an intense belief in those things which are eternal. He saw everything on its Divine side. He visualised the past and the future gathered up in the manifestation of the Son of God. In no other fact could the world have any hope. This was his matured conviction from the evidence of sense and thought (1 John i. 1). *He saw, and therefore he bore witness. He loved, and therefore he lived.*

And so it was given to the aged disciple of love to "tarry," as a witness of eternal truths, through long years which elapsed after the passing of the other Apostles. In days of ripened and matured thought he

was allowed of God to record his impressions, and to write his visions—and to do so in such a way that he bequeathed to the Church, and to generations yet unborn, a priceless legacy and liberty, without which the souls of men, and of Israel redeemed, could never have adequately known their Lord.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN (I.).

THIS beautiful Epistle is one of the most priceless treasures in the archives of New Testament literature. We use the word Epistle advisedly, for the writing was always called a "letter" in the early catalogues of the Books of the New Testament. But it is not an Epistle in the sense that the writings of St. Paul, for example, are Epistles. It contains neither address nor subscription; it has no personal reference to an author; nor does it give any indication of any particular destination.

A PASTORAL.

Yet it vibrates throughout with deep personal feeling, and has all the semblance of a letter written by a living man to living men, between whom there is a bond of fellowship, a fellowship which finds its consummation in the Divine. In other respects it is not unlike a theological treatise, for although clothed in the simplest language, it soars to the greatest heights, and deals with things both sublime and eternal, embracing the mystery of the Incarnation, and the Doctrine of the Atonement. It may, therefore, be termed an Encyclical or Pastoral Epistle. It was addressed to a circle of readers, as is seen by the words "I write unto you," "beloved," "fathers," "young men," "my little children." But it was not ascribed or restricted to any particular Church, nor does it contain any personal messages.

Its authorship has never been seriously disputed, and the fact that it was written by St. John, the author of the Fourth Gospel, has been firmly established from sub-apostolic days. Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 39) tells us that Papias (who may have been a " hearer " of St. John) " made use of testimonies from the First Epistle of John, and likewise from that of Peter." He frequently refers to this Epistle, and says that Irenæus extracted " many testimonies from it " (*H.E.* v. 8).

EPHESUS.

We have little or no evidence indicating the place from which it was written. No definite statement occurs in any early Christian literature. But it is always assumed that the three Epistles of St. John belong to the same period as the Gospel, and therefore it is natural to suppose that they were written from Ephesus, with which city the most ancient tradition connects the composition of the Fourth Gospel. Both Irenæus (*contr. Haer.* iii. 1) and Jerome (*Prolog. to Matt.*, Vol. VII., pp. 5, 6) claim the Ephesine origin of the Gospel, while Eusebius (iii. 1, 23) and other early writers are emphatic in their statement that St. John, " after continuing some time [in Asia], died in Ephesus." Ephesus, therefore, is the city in which St. John wrote his Gospel and Epistles, and it was the first of the Seven Churches to which St. John gave his message of Revelation (Rev. i. 11, ii. 1-7). St. Paul had founded the Church in that city (Acts xviii. 19, xix.), and in view of its being on the main route from Rome to the East, had measured its value as a centre for the Gospel, the more so in consequence of the world-famed magnificence of its temple. To the Christians, Ephesus and Asia were almost convertible terms; Ephesus stood for Asia; Asia was Ephesus. Pliny, who, in his famous *Natural History*, has much to say about Ephesus, calls

it "the light of Asia." Head, in his *History of the Coinage of Ephesus*, records a coin of Vespasian, on which it is spoken of as "the chief city of Asia." The temple, "reared by the arts of Greece and the wealth of Asia," was one of the wonders of the world (Acts xix. 27), having taken 220 years in building. Yet it has been eclipsed by the magnificence of Christian architecture, for St. Paul's Cathedral is 75 feet longer, while St. Peter's, Rome, is 195 feet greater in length.

THE LATEST NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS.

Of the duration of St. John's residence and episcopacy at Ephesus we have no certain knowledge, nor can we be sure that he succeeded Timothy immediately as Bishop. It is, however, generally believed that the Apostle laboured a generation—more than a quarter of a century—in Ephesus, during part of which time he was banished to Patmos, where, in his island loneliness, he wrote the Apocalypse. It was after his return to the mainland that he composed the Gospel and the Epistles. Some think that the Gospel was the last work which the aged Apostle penned, basing it upon an oral Gospel of his own composition. Others believe that he wrote the Gospel before the Epistles, in which case the latter are the very latest writings of the New Testament. In either case the Gospel and the Epistles form a final group by themselves, and were written but a short while before the close of the first Christian century. It is generally conceded that St. John lived to the time of Trajan, about A.D. 100, and there are some who think that he did not die before 102.

A PILLAR OF THE CHURCH.

Nor have we any knowledge of the circumstances of St. John's life from the period of the Acts. He is, in earlier days, almost completely overshadowed by

St. Peter and St. Paul. Only five times is he mentioned in narrative (Acts i. 13, iii. 4, iv. 13, viii. 14, and Gal. ii. 9), and then always in conjunction with others. On the last occasion it was at Jerusalem, during the second visit of St. Paul, when, with James and Cephas, he was recognised as a "pillar" of the Church. Some writers have found it difficult to reconcile the statement of St. Paul that on his first visit to Jerusalem he saw none of the Apostles "save James the Lord's brother" (Acts i. 19), in view of the fact that St. John remained at Jerusalem after the Crucifixion in sacred charge of the Virgin Mother. But there is nothing to prevent the probability of St. John having returned to Galilee within a few years after Pentecost, where he may have remained until the destruction of Jerusalem, by which time circumstances may have guided him to Asia, where, as we have seen, he must have laboured for at least some 25 or 30 years.

If, in the New Testament narrative, St. John seems to have been overshadowed by the other Apostles, it is only because the spread of the Gospel in early days necessitated the recording of missionary and evangelistic results. But if St. John was not the active protagonist of the pioneer missionary Gospel that St. Paul was, he was nevertheless the Christ-like character whose saintly influence mellowed the enthusiasm of the early Church with an inspired vision of life and love. As has been said, "St. Paul has ever something of the horseman, speeding on to Damascus; St. John is ever resting on the bosom of Jesus."

THE LIGHT AND LOVE OF GOD.

As the other Apostles were traversing land and sea, preaching the evangel, disputing with the Jews, founding Churches, and expanding the Kingdom, St. John was "in quietness and confidence" bearing witness

to the love of Christ in his own appointed way. Long years after that the other Apostles had one by one laid down their task within the gates of martyrdom, St. John continued in simple eloquence to bear record of the Truth. "Still waters run deep," and the still waters of life ran deep in the soul of John. He lived to love, and he loved to live. To him God was life, and God was love. To abide in Christ was the very principle of his being. To dwell upon eternal things was to him the source of unbroken joy. To meditate upon the words of Jesus was music to his soul. To educate his children in the faith about eternal life was to unfold to them the knowledge of Christ, the progressive recognition of God.

ABIDING IN CHRIST.

Hence the Epistle is complementary to the Gospel. The latter was written to prove the Divinity of Christ (John xx. 31). The Epistle was written to prove the humanity of Christ (1 John iv. 2, 3; v. 6). The Gospel says "Jesus is the Christ," the Epistle says "The Christ is Jesus." Each of them is the outcome of a ripened experience, based on contact with the Divine (1 John i. 1, 2). Each of them bears the firstfruits of Christian fellowship, the offspring of abiding in Christ.

And so the First Epistle of St. John takes us into the Sanctuary of God and lays bare the sinfulness of the human soul before the advocacy of Christ. It reveals the Doctrine of God with its Divine Fatherhood. It explains the nature of man, warped by the Devil and sin. It unfolds the scheme of redemption and propitiation through the precious Blood. It solves the solution to all human problems by proving that there is no fellowship without love, *Love both human and Divine.*

CHAPTER XLII.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN (II.).

WE have seen that there is a strong presumption in favour of the Epistles of St. John having been written at Ephesus, a short while after the Apostle had written the Fourth Gospel, and not long before the close of the first Christian century. We have also remarked that the First Epistle was not addressed to any particular destination. Being, as we have seen, an Encyclical or Pastoral Epistle, it was probably circulated "broadcast" in the modern sense of that word, and as such was written generally to the Christians of Ephesus and Asia. There are no indications whatsoever from internal evidence that there was any thought of the Christians at Rome, or those in Palestine or Jerusalem, being the recipients of St. John's Letters, for there is no reference in them to any special characteristic, either Western or Eastern, neither is there any mention of the Fall of Jerusalem, nor of the Dispersion of the Jews.

A CATHOLIC EPISTLE.

The Epistle is therefore eminently Catholic in tone and purpose. And, bearing in mind that the New Testament Books were written primarily for the building up of Israel redeemed by the Blood of the Cross, and reinstated by the New Covenant, it may be concluded that St. John was writing to the Israelite Christians of his day, whom he longed to see growing in the light, love, and life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Holy One of Israel.

The only topical reference in the Epistle is to be found in the last word, "idols." And what could be more natural than that St. John, himself surrounded by the idolatry that was practised in connection with the wonderful Temple at Ephesus, should endeavour to see his children in the faith true to the righteousness of God, and preserved inviolate from the false worship of the heathen Greeks?

The Epistle is not merely the charge of a local Bishop, solicited by the limited and transient requirements of a restricted environment. It is rather the voice of an Apostle speaking transcendently above the din of battle, whose words breathe a message for all time, applicable through Christian thought to "all sorts and conditions of men."

ITS SECRET.

The secret of the Epistle lies in the fact that St. John enjoyed the closest confidence and affection of the Lord. There lingered long in his memory, a memory which matured and ripened with the honour of old age, the vividness of the actual words and works of Jesus. The Epistle is coloured by them; its language in Johannine simplicity is clothed with the thoughts of the Lord; its style is stamped with the impress of the mind of Christ. It is an illustrated discourse on the subject of the Christian life, not theoretical, but practical, being written as a postscript to the Fourth Gospel by one who had enjoyed contact with his Lord (i. 1, 2), and who knew, therefore, by treasured experience how real was the influence and the incarnate presence of the Risen Christ. The Epistle is the fruition of a consecrated life, whose meditations were ever centred upon the historical and transcendental aspects of the Person of "Jesus Christ come in the flesh." The Living Christ Himself is the theme. The manifestation of His life

bespeaks an unbroken fellowship. If neither the Cross nor the Resurrection be directly mentioned, it is that only through the Cross and the Resurrection can continuous fellowship with Christ be achieved, and even then no fellowship is valid and trustworthy, unless, by practical results, the Christian lives up to the standard of holy discipleship (i. 6, ii. 4, 9).

ITS PURPOSE.

The purpose of the Epistle was therefore to uphold the doctrines of the Divine Person in actual human experience. Strangely enough, St. John makes no reference to, or quotation from, the Old Testament (and the same fact may be observed in the other Epistles of St. John, and also in St. Paul's Letter to Philemon), with the exception of the reference to Cain (iii. 12), for he draws from his own personal consciousness of Christ, who is to him the fulness of Light, Love, and Life. His great object was to counteract the errors of the day. For there were some who, as in the case of the Ebionites and the followers of Cerinthus, questioned the Divine dignity of our Lord, and denied Him to be the Son of God. These the Apostle calls deceivers, liars, and antichrist (ii. 22, iv. 15, v. 1). Again, there were others who denied our Lord's humanity, and who contradicted the real fellowship of Christ with men (Heb. ii. 16, iv. 15), and who questioned the fact of His death and propitiation. They held His Incarnation to be an hallucination or subjective appearance, and the story of His life to be but a myth. This delusion St. John vehemently denounces, for had he not actually "handled with his hands" the Word of Life, and seen the "water and blood" flowing from His pierced side (1 John i. 1, iv. 3, v. 6; John xix. 34)?

Others, also, there were who exhibited the anti-nomian errors of later centuries, and who were willing

to worship Christ spiritually, without heeding the consequences of sin and physical temptations. To these evil-doers the Apostle emphasises the fact that all "sin is the transgression of the law" (iii. 4), and that fellowship with God purifies the Christian, and by that purity only can we be known as His children (ii. 5, iii. 8-10, iv. 13, v. 11).

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

The correction of these, the sinful errors of that day, and of subsequent generations, draws forth from St. John the true definitions of Christian fellowship, and herein we may best observe the analysis of the Epistle. After the introduction (i. 1-4), which forms an exact parallel to the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel (John i. 1-5), the Epistle divides itself into three correlated parts, followed by a brief conclusion. These are:—

Fellowship with God as Light (i. 5—ii.).

Fellowship with God as Love (iii.—iv.).

Fellowship with God as Life (v. 1 - 12).

Conclusion (v. 13-21).

ANALYSIS.

(i.) *God is Light*. This is one of the greatest truths ever enunciated. Light is, physically speaking, the parent of life. Without light life cannot exist. What solar sunshine is to the body, and to all animate creation, that, *in extenso ad infinitum*, "the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6) is "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ" (Col. i. 2). But the mention of light bespeaks the existence of darkness by virtue of contrast. Hence the fact that God is Light shows up the darkness of sin, so that the holiness of God demands our knowledge in the fellowship of light that "the blood of

Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." The only way to dispel darkness is to turn on the light; and Christ is the Light of the world, who will give the "light of life" to them that follow Him (John viii. 12). This knowledge and reception of the Light requires a constancy and consistency in practical fellowship. It involves hatred of worldliness (ii. 15-17), and a righteous abiding in Christ (ii. 28, 29).

(ii.) *God is Love*. This is the simplest lesson which even a little child can understand. God's love has made us His children (iii. 1, R.V.); and as His children, we must bear the Divine likeness, if not now, more fully later on. And so love is the great purifying influence in the Church. It is not only love for Christ in God, it is also love for man in God. *We love, because He first loved us* (iv. 19, R.V.). False teachers and deluding spirits may tempt us to sin, and to deny Christ, but *love conquers all*, and casts out fear (iv. 18). The secret of true fellowship is Love, *Love both human and Divine*.

(iii.) *God is Life*. This is the fundamental of faith. Life, both physical and spiritual, comes from the authorship of God. This is proved by the eternity of both Light and Love. They act together, and form a trinity of Truth. And so Life claims belief (v. 1), a victorious faith (v. 4), and a triune witness (v. 8-12). Love is the origin of Life, and Life is the origin of Love (v. 1). The fundamental aspect of fellowship with God is fellowship in Life and fellowship in Love. The possession of the knowledge of Christ is Eternal Life (v. 11; John xvii. 3); the possession of Eternal Life is a growth in Love and Light.

CONCLUSION.

The perfection of Christian fellowship in Light, Love, and Life, is completed in confidence (boldness) and

communion. It is an unbroken contact with the Divine. It guarantees answers to prayer, and requires a brotherly watchfulness regarding the corporate life within the body of Christian believers. It involves a whole-hearted consecration to Divine righteousness, and an unequivocal turning from worldly sin and—idols.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THIS Epistle was written by St. John towards the end of the first Christian century, and probably about the same time as his other Epistles.

There can be no doubt that St. John was the author, as the style, the language, the thought, and the "personality" of the Epistle point with irresistible force to its Johannine authorship. The fact that the writer does not mention his own name—a custom which was adhered to by both St. Paul and St. Peter in their Epistles—in no way contravenes our conviction that St. John was the author, since he preserves his anonymity in the Fourth Gospel, as also in the other Epistles, although he certainly places his name to the forefront in the Apocalypse as the author (Rev. i. 4) of that wonderful series of visions.

THE ELDER.

But in the case of the Second and Third Epistles, it will be noticed that the author calls himself "The elder" (*ὁ πρεσβύτερος*), literally "the presbyter." In all probability this title was used to signify one writing in an official capacity, or it may be interpreted in the simple sense of one advanced in years. We have seen that the word "elder" represents the order of Presbyters, which arose in early Apostolic days, and that the Presbyters are first mentioned in connection with the Christian Brotherhood in Jerusalem (Acts xi. 30,—see Chapter XXXI.), and that it was the second order in the threefold Christian Ministry.

Yet it is unlikely that the word used here by the author of this Epistle refers to a local elder or Presbyter, viz., to a minister ordained by one of the Apostles, owing to the fact that the definite article "the" supposes an authoritative person or Apostle to be the writer. Added to which the words "The Elder" have a position of prominence and emphasis, being the opening words of the Epistle. Further, it is a similar title to that by which St. Peter designates himself when he is writing to the elders amongst the dispersed elect (1 Peter v. 1).

ONLY ONE JOHN.

But much controversy has raged from earliest times over the identity of St. John, and especially over that of the author of the Apocalypse and of the Epistles, owing to a tradition mentioned by Papias as quoted by Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 39), that there were apparently two Johns, the one John the Disciple and Apostle, and the other John the Elder (or the Presbyter John). Eusebius further speaks of there being "two tombs in Ephesus, and that both are called John's even to this day." However, without weighing the evidence for or against the theory of Papias, it is generally admitted that the Presbyter John of Papias is the same as St. John the Apostle, and we are content to believe that St. John the Apostle and Evangelist was the author of both the Fourth Gospel, the three Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

THE ELECT LADY.

We have now to consider the interesting question of the destination of the Epistle. To whom did St. John write it? To whom is the Letter inscribed? Westcott says (*Epistles of St. John*, p. lvi.): "The destination of the Second Letter is enigmatic. No solution of the problem offered by Ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ (elect lady) is satisfac-

tory. Nor does the Letter itself offer any marked individuality of address."

There are, however, three suggestions which have, in one direction or another, found favour:—

(a) That the "elect lady" refers to an individual Christian matron in Ephesus and her family. On this supposition, *Kyria* would be the actual name of the Christian woman to whom the Apostle was writing. This theory was favoured by Athanasius, and has been followed by later scholars. It has in its defence the fact that the name *Kyria* (κυρία) has been found as a proper name, and that there is an analogy in the address at the opening of the Third Epistle. On the other hand there is a weight of authority against this interpretation, which has, in consequence, never found full acceptance. Nor does the original Greek give support, as in view of this rendering the Greek should more naturally be κυρία τῇ ἐκλεκτῇ, *to Kyria, the elect*.

(b) That the "elect lady" refers to some ordinary Christian woman whose name and identity are withheld from us, and regarding whose children the Apostle writes, partly in praise, and partly in caution.

(c) That the "elect lady" refers to a Church personified, with its constituent members regarded as "her children." This was the view adopted by Jerome, and in modern times by Lightfoot, Salmon, and others. This idea is capable of two interpretations, (i.) that the "elect lady" may be an individual Church, situated perhaps somewhere else in Asia other than at Ephesus, and that the Church at Ephesus is the children who send their greeting, in the last verse; (ii.) that the "elect lady" is none other than the Church universal, *i.e.*, Israel redeemed.

AN ENIGMA.

There is much to be said in favour of this last interpretation, *i.e.*, that the "elect lady" refers to the

Church of Israel, because it is well known that St. John makes frequent use of symbolical or mystical expressions. Further, it is sometimes pointed out that the language of verses 10, 11, 13, is more applicable to a Church than to an individual.

But the great difficulty which presents itself against the confident adoption of this interpretation is the reference in the last verse. For if the "elect lady" refers to Israel, it is difficult, on the grounds of consistency, to know who is meant by "the children of thy elect sister."

We are, therefore, regretfully compelled to agree with Westcott's decision, as quoted above, and to admit that the destination of the Epistle is "enigmatical."

LIGHT, LOVE, AND LIFE.

The Second Epistle is a concrete application of those principles which, as we have seen in the First Epistle, in the truths of Light, Love, and Life, are the essentials of the Christian Faith. Whatever meaning is to be attached to the mystic words "elect lady," a beautiful lesson is taught in relation to the importance in the sight of God of the saintly virtues of a Christian mother, be she a godly matron or a watchful Church. Nor does it fail to emphasise the earnestness with which the religious welfare of the young should be guarded and developed.

FELLOWSHIP OF LOVE.

The essential teaching of the Epistle is to summarise the truth that Christianity is Love, and that a Divine Love which operates in mutual conjunction with Light and Life. The denial of the truth is the negation of Love. The recognition of the truth is the fellowship of Love. Hence "this is love, that we walk after His commandments."

There are only thirteen verses in this short but beautiful Epistle, yet the word *love* occurs four times, and *truth* five times. The word *commandment* occurs four times, and *walk* three times. All of these words are to be found frequently repeated in the writings of St. John, and thereby characterise the Johannine doctrine of the Christian's abiding in Christ.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

MUCH that has been said in the previous chapters about the First and Second Epistles of St. John applies to this, the Third Epistle, also.

It was in utmost probability written from Ephesus about the close of the first Christian century, and, as in the case of its two predecessors, there can be no doubt but that it was written by St. John. Its style, thought, and language, are similar to those of the other Epistles, and the personality and mentality of St. John are indelibly impressed upon its fourteen verses.

If the Epistle did not find its way immediately into the Canon of the New Testament, the doubts which surrounded it were probably due to the fact that the letter was private in character, and that such a private and personal note would require a length of time before it could become widely known among the Churches of Asia.

GAIUS.

The destination of the Third Epistle is more clearly defined than that of the two previous Epistles. In fact, we are told the actual name of the one to whom St. John was writing. We know his name to be Gaius, but we lack all further information regarding the identity of this individual, save that we gather him to have enjoyed the confidence of the Apostle. He was also famous for the Christian hospitality which he extended "to the brethren, and to strangers." The name Gaius (Latin *Caius*) was a common one in those days. There are three persons known by that name as disciples in connection with the earliest records of Apostolic Christianity. One is associated with "Aristarchus, of

Macedonia " (Acts xix. 29). A second came from Derbe (Acts xx. 4); while yet another is mentioned with gratitude by St. Paul as " Caius mine host, and of the whole Church " (Rome xvi. 23), who is probably the same Caius (with Crispus) that St. Paul baptised (1 Cor. i. 14). Nor is there any proof whatsoever that the Gaius who was the immortalised recipient of this beautiful Letter is to be identified with either of the above. In all probability he was an ordinary Christian gentleman known to St. John, within the circle of his own immediate disciples, for we have no clue as to his residence, nor to the particular Church in Asia to which he evidently belonged.

DIOTREPES.

There are two other names mentioned in the Epistle which may command a little attention. " Diotrepes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not," said St. John. Diotrepes is otherwise quite unknown to us. The name (Διοτρεφής) means " trained, or cherished by Zeus," and is used by Homer especially as an epithet of kings and nobles. Some think that Diotrepes was an ordained minister, who resented the Apostolic authority of St. John, and equally opposed himself to the gentler virtues and homely hospitality of Gaius. Perhaps, as his name suggests, he prided himself on his aristocratic birth, or he may have assumed a semi-royal rank, with which he boasted himself over the heads of the more humble and consistent Christians of the Church. Apparently St. John had written a previous letter to this particular (but unidentified) Church, and Diotrepes had headed an exclusive party which had contemned the Apostle's leadership and authority. Therefore St. John, who was a " son of thunder," wasted no time in denouncing the rebellion and schism of Diotrepes, and publicly rebuked him for his evil deeds and malicious " prating." Nor

can we fail to see that the gentle and susceptible mind of the aged Apostle was hurt by the mischievous gossip and opposition, which not only distressed his beautiful soul, but tended to cause the excommunication of those brethren with whom Diotrophes, in his self-centred narrow-mindedness, found himself in lack of agreement.

DEMETRIUS.

On the other hand, the mention of Demetrius causes a pleasing contrast. Of him, also, we know nothing, unless—and the possibility may be more practical than passing—he may be identified with the Demetrius who was a silversmith at Ephesus, and who, in the days of St. Paul, had gained his living by making “silver shrines of Diana” (Acts xix. 24-41). If this identity be allowed, it is of interest to indulge in the belief that he may have been converted by St. Paul, and then, still residing in Ephesus, may have become a loyal and devoted disciple of St. John. At any rate, he was of “good report,” and a recognised believer in the “truth,” and one who had attained to the affection and respect of the Apostle to so great an extent that he received a special commendation.

HOSPITALITY.

This Epistle gives a notable insight into the Eastern, as well as Christian, laws of hospitality. As is well known, hospitality is the unwritten law of the East. It is the timeless privilege of the nomadic Arab on the desert. It was the cherished custom of the Israelites in days of yore, and it became one of the tenets of early Christian discipline (Luke vii. 44-46; Rom. xii. 13, 20; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 8; Heb. xiii. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 9).

Presumably there were missionaries and preachers who went round from town to town, from Church to Church, in St. John's day, “for His Name's sake,”

who would take nothing of the heathen, but who were dependent upon the Christians for their substance and support. The Apostle encouraged this (3 John 5-8), as did St. Paul (Gal. vi. 9, 10). As such the house of Gaius became a centre of hospitality, and from him—in contradistinction to the treatment which they received from Diotrephes and his party—these evangelists were the recipients of a brotherly welcome.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

And so this wonderful little Epistle is full of Love, Light, and Life. It breathes the same message as that conveyed by the previous Letters in the group, but upon examination it is seen to throw a flood of light upon the internal organisation and experiences of the early Apostolic Church. We see the recognition of the Episcopate in the Apostleship of St. John at Ephesus. We see the administration of Christian fellowship in the existence of those missionary travellers and evangelists, for whose bodily and spiritual needs the Church had to make itself responsible. We see the growth of the opposition hurled against the principles of organised Church government by those who disputed authority; and with that we must observe that those who are the unsubmitive become, in the end, the greatest of tyrants.

GOD IS LOVE.

And thus we cannot fail to see that St. Paul was right when he eulogised that Love which “seeketh not her own,” and that Diotrephes was wrong when he loved “to have the pre-eminence.” So St. John teaches that Love exercises itself in loyalty to truth, and that selfishness is the sequence to following “that which is evil” rather than “that which is good.” For “God is Love,” and “he that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”

CHAPTER XLV.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

JUDE, the author of this Epistle, tells us that he was a "servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." Beyond such personal characteristics which are suggested in the Epistle, nothing is known about the author, nor are we expressly told of which James he is the brother. The allusion in verse 17 to "the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" suggests that he was not an Apostle himself, in which case he could hardly have been the same as "Judas, not Iscariot," who was known also as Lebbæus (John xiv. 22; Matt. x. 3; Luke vi. 16).

JUDE.

There are at least three well-known men named James in the New Testament: James, the brother of John, whose father was Zebedee; James, a disciple, the son of Alphæus, who was also an Apostle; and James "the Lord's brother" (Gal. i. 19), who was not one of the twelve, and who became converted—and hence an Apostle—by a special revelation from the Risen Lord (1 Cor. xv. 7). It is practically a certainty, therefore, that Jude, the author of this Epistle, was one of the Lord's brethren (Matt. xiii. 55), and the brother of James, who presided over the great Jerusalem Council (Acts xv. 13), and who wrote the Epistle bearing his name (see Chapter XXXVI.). Against this, however, it must be mentioned that tradition has identified Jude with the above-mentioned "Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus," one of the Twelve. But reasons have already been given showing why this view cannot

be accepted, added to which, as the Revised Version corrects, he was, more probably, the son of a certain but otherwise unknown James, and not the brother (Luke vi. 16, R.V.).

THE LORD'S BROTHER.

All that we know, therefore, about Jude, the author of this Epistle, is that, as a brother of the Lord, he belonged to the Nazarene household, and, like the rest of His brethren (John vii. 5), he did not believe in Jesus Christ until after the Resurrection (Acts i. 13). It is concluded that he was married (1 Cor. ix. 5), and tradition relates that he had two grandchildren, named Zoker and James. Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 19, 20, 32), quoting from Hegesippus, relates the story that Domitian commanded the descendants of David to be slain. Whereupon certain heretics made accusation against the grandchildren of Judas, "called the brother of our Lord, according to the flesh." But Domitian, after questioning them severely, came to the conclusion that they were "simpletons," because in reply to the tormenting questions of Domitian, they said that Christ's kingdom "was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but celestial and angelic; that it would appear at the end of the world, when, coming in glory, He would judge the quick and the dead, and give to every one according to his works." And so, treating them with contempt, Domitian commanded them to be dismissed, and by a decree ordered the persecution to cease. Eusebius further says that "thus delivered, they ruled the Churches, both as witnesses and relatives of the Lord. When peace was established, they continued living even to the times of Trajan."

DESTINATION.

The destination of the Epistle is important, and the address is better rendered in the Revised Version.

Jude wrote to "them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." Now, only one people were ever "called" by God, *i.e.*, Israel (Isa. xliii. 1, xlviii. 12), "to whom belonged the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Rom. ix. 4). Of Israel did the Lord say, "Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee" (Isa. xliii. 4). Of whom else than Israel did the Lord speak when He said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3)? And so our Lord prayed, "Keep, through Thine own Name, those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are" (John xvii. 11). The same Israel, who was "called," and "beloved," was "kept," sealed, and preserved, by God, that they might be redeemed by Jesus Christ, who came to "confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8). For

"He hath remembered His mercy and His truth
Toward the House of Israel:
All the ends of the earth hath seen
The salvation of our God."

THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.

We have, therefore, a clear indication as to the destination and purpose of the Epistle. Its author belonged to "the House and lineage of David" (Luke ii. 4), of the Tribe of Judah. But, through his conversion to Christ, he became associated with redeemed Israel, and was proud to be "a servant of Christ Jesus," apparently accounting that of higher spiritual value than physical kinship. Being one of the Lord's brethren, Jude was a member of the Tribe of Judah. But, becoming a "bondservant of Jesus Christ," he at once identified himself with Christ's permanent mission to "visit and redeem His people," *i.e.*, "all the

families of Israel " (Jer. xxxiii. 1). He therefore writes to the redeemed House of Israel, who are " called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ."

DISTURBING ERRORS.

In all probability, St. Jude forwarded his Epistle to a Church, or a circle of Churches, in Syria, or in the Hellenistic cities of Palestine, over which district, generally speaking, his brother James had Episcopal jurisdiction. Syria was a breeding-ground for those unbalanced ideas which, in the second century, evolved into Gnosticism, and when, many years later, St. John wrote the Apocalypse, the Churches of Asia were disturbed by the Nicolaitans and others who, like Balaam, led the Israelites into sensual idolatry (Rev. ii. 2, 6, 14, 15; Jude 7-11).

A BEAUTIFUL EXHORTATION.

Apparently the early Church had to fight against a certain class of sins such as fornication, the self-aggrandisement of those who assumed prophetic power (cf. Diotrephes, 3 John), new esoteric doctrines, and possibly magic and " sorcery " (Acts viii. 9-24, xiii. 6-12, xix. 18, 19). Hence Jude, in keeping with other New Testament writers, is not slow to condemn such evils, of which the Christian Church, in its younger days, needed to be purified, and he is, therefore, constrained to issue one of the most beautiful of exhortations contained in the Holy Scriptures, embodying the recognition of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity : " But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most Holy Faith,

- (i.) Praying in the Holy Ghost,
- (ii.) Keep yourselves in the Love of God,
- (iii.) Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life."

It is an injunction to the Israel of God to watch the development and progress of the Christian life, as a thoughtful gardener cares for the protection and growth of his flowers. The foundation of everything is the "most Holy Faith," which can alone be obtained, and built upon, through the Cross of the living Christ (1 Cor. iii. 11), who, Himself, is "the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. xii. 2), "the Alpha and the Omega" (Rev. i. 8), the supreme consummation of all things "visible and invisible" (Col. i. 16-20).

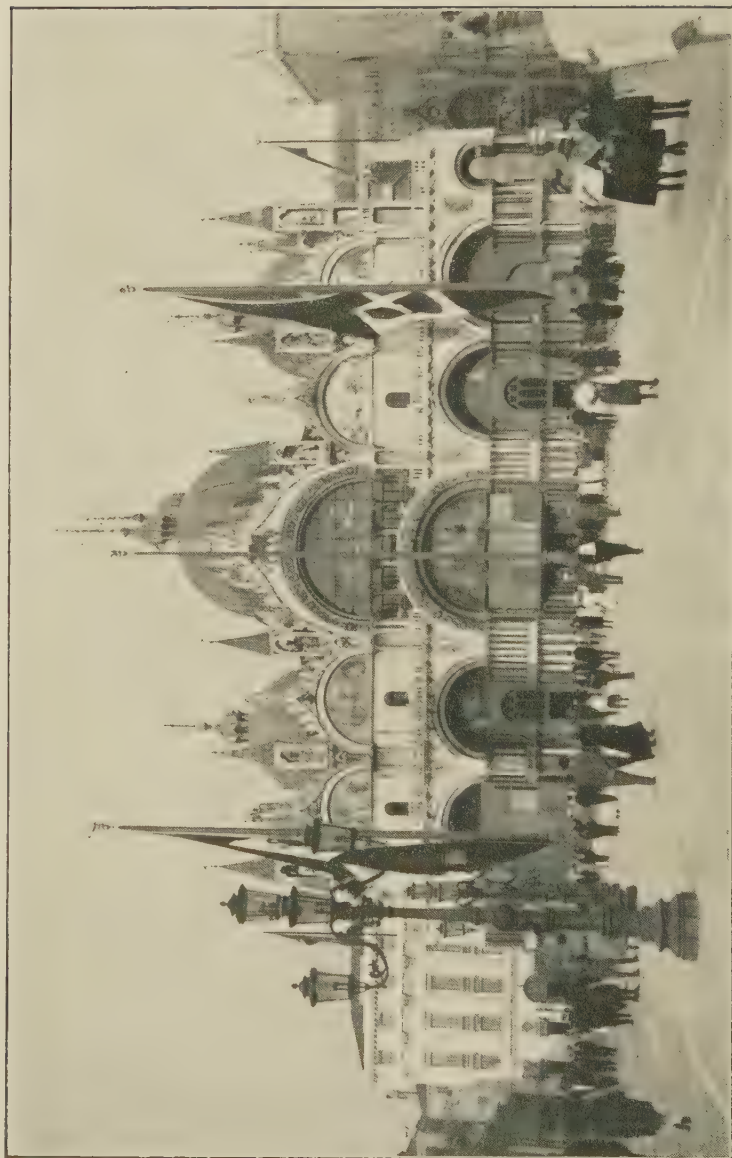
It is also an injunction to remember that only by constant and earnest prayer "in the Holy Ghost" can this Christian life be sustained, and that by the life-long act of abiding permanently in God's love, with the heavenly and spiritual goal always in view of the mercy of Jesus Christ, in the bosom of whom the Christian rests, looking for His coming, in the spirit of joyous and watchful expectation.

PARALLEL TEACHING.

There are interesting features in this Epistle which cannot be overlooked by the student, and they may be classified under the category of literary kinship with other Epistles and apocryphal writings. Comparisons will readily be noted between this Letter and the writings of St. Paul, and the Pastoral Epistles especially. Nor will the extraordinary likeness between Jude and 2 Peter ii. fail to escape attention. Whether Peter borrowed from Jude, or Jude from Peter, remains a moot point; or it may be that each writer used a common source, whether oral or documentary.

DATE.

In all probability the Epistle of Jude was written about A.D. 67 or 68, as there is nothing to suggest that the Fall of Jerusalem had taken place, in which case



Photograph by

ST. MARK'S, VENICE.

REV. G. H. LANCASTER.

it may have been written at about the same period as that in which the Epistle to the Hebrews was published, a period for ever rendered sacred by the martyrdom of St. Paul and St. Peter.

PURPOSE.

The Epistle is, then, an invaluable contribution to the inspired literature of the New Testament. Its design in the main was to guard the Christian Church of Israel redeemed against false teachers and internal foes, such as insubordination and licentiousness. It concludes with a wonderful ascription of praise to Him who alone is "able to keep you from falling," and "to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN (I.).

THE Apocalypse of St. John, or, as it is termed in the Biblical title, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, is the book which closes the Canon of the New Testament, and which may be rightly described as the most wonderful Book in the Bible. The opening words, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," not only serve as a preface to the Apocalypse, but they act as the standard definition of the Scriptures, which, from beginning to end, show forth the glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

AUTHORSHIP.

At the beginning of the Revelation, and again at the end (i. 1, 4, 9; xxii. 8), we learn that the author of this truly inspiring book is St. John. He describes himself as a servant of Jesus Christ, a brother of "the seven churches which are in Asia," a partaker with them in the tribulation which they suffered in Jesus Christ, and, at the moment of writing, an exile "in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." By the latter phrase, the "testimony of Jesus," the Apostle refers to that witness which he had borne to our Lord by virtue of his membership of the brotherhood of Christian prophets or seers (xii. 17, xix. 10, xxii. 9). He speaks with unchallenged authority, and as one who is wholly familiar with the detailed circumstances connected with the Churches in Asia, in whose province he had resided, and over whose Christian societies he had presided as Apostle, Bishop, and Overseer, particularly in Ephesus, "the light of Asia."

ST. JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST.

Much discussion has arisen for centuries regarding the identity of the John who wrote the Apocalypse. For there is a strong tradition known to Irenæus, Papias, and Eusebius, that there were two Johns, one the Apostle and Evangelist, and the other the Elder; and it has been claimed that it was not the Apostle John (the son of Zebedee) who wrote the Revelation. But there are abundant reasons, apart from tradition, for believing that the author was St. John the Apostle, and "the disciple whom Jesus loved." No one can deny that there is an affinity between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, even to the point of minute resemblances—although the latter may be counterbalanced by profound differences. Nor can we fail to trace the fiery, yet affectionate, personality of the Apostle, to whom, we believe, was given the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*. The objection raised by Dionysius (quoted by Eusebius, *H.E.*, vii. 25), that St. John wrote the Fourth Gospel (and the Epistles) anonymously, whereas the Apocalypse breaks the Johannine custom, and mentions the name of the author, remains unanswered, and is, perhaps, more confusing than convincing. We are not, therefore, disposed to give up our belief in the traditional, and generally accepted, opinion that St. John, the Galilæan fisherman, and disciple of the Lord, wrote the Apocalypse, and we unhesitatingly maintain the conviction that it was he, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who wrote both the Fourth Gospel and the three Epistles, as well as the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

PATMOS.

This interesting island, about 10 miles in length from north to south, about 6 miles in breadth, with a circumference of 37 miles owing to the winding nature of the

coast, is situated in the east of the Ægean Sea, and is one of the group of the Sporades. It is not frequently mentioned by ancient writers (Thucydides iii. 33, Strabo x. 5, 13; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* iv. 23), although it occurs in the inscriptions (*Corpus Inscriptionum Græcarum*, 2261, 2262, etc.). The island is volcanic, being bare and rocky throughout. Its highest hill rises to 800 ft. above sea level, and commands magnificent views of the surrounding sea and islands. Owing to its indented coastline, it has always afforded safe harbourage, which is as useful to commerce as it has been favourable to piracy. Patmos lies some 40 miles S.W. by W. from Miletus, and was the first or last stopping-place for travellers voyaging from Ephesus to Rome, or from Rome to Ephesus. It is shaped something like a crescent, the concave side facing eastwards, the traditional scene of the Apocalypse, together with the Monastery of St. John, being towards the southern horn.

THE INFLUENCE OF NATURE.

The topography of the island doubtless helped to frame the setting of the Visions of St. John, for the Revelation is full of references to the grander forces of nature such as the island, famous for its seismic conditions, might naturally suggest to the subjective influence of the Apostle's vision. The grotto (τὸ σπήλαιον τῆς ἀποκαλύψεως) in which St. John is said to have received the heavenly vision is still shown, while the island, with its wild and desolate scenery, would readily account for the references to "the sound of many waters" (i. 15); "dens," "rocks," "mountains" (vi. 15, 16; xvi. 20, xvii. 9); "thunderings" and "lightnings" (iv. 5, vi. 1, viii. 5, x. 3, 4; xi. 19, xiv. 2, xvi. 18, xix. 6); "sand" (xiii. 1, xx. 8); "sea" (26 times). Nor would the glassy calm of the Ægean waters on a summer's day fail to aid in the vision of

the "sea of glass like unto crystal," ever supporting the azure dome of Heaven's throne, from which the sun would shine in glory and magnificence. And even if the gentle showers were inclined to intercept the rays of golden sunshine, it was as if there were "a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald," when contrasted with the green verdure interspersed among the barren rocks and broken cliffs.

Or, as the Apostle would seek an evening's meditation, having watched the sun from morn till night, what more natural than to see in the gradual appearance of the planets, hanging like electric orbs in a star-spangled sky above the crystal sea, "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God," and which to him would recall the radiating glory of his beloved Churches beyond the distant horizon (Rev. iv. 2-6)?

DATE.

Much doubt has always been entertained regarding the period in which the Revelation was written. There are two theories, between which the pendulum has alternately swung: (1) the last years of Domitian, who died in A.D. 96, and (2) just before or after the close of Nero's reign, who died A.D. 68.

PERIOD OF DOMITIAN.

(1) There is an early tradition which assigns the Apocalypse to the last years of Domitian, nor can this tradition be easily dismissed owing to its being so unanimously held by the early Church. It was held by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and in later days it has been maintained by Elliott, Wordsworth, Alford, and Ramsay. There is much of internal evidence to support this early tradition, for the ecclesiastical organisation of the Seven Churches

addressed in the opening chapters suggests that they had been founded for a considerable time, even to the extent of a period long enough in which to make allowance for their state of spiritual declension.

Again, the book contains indications of what is called the prevalence of the Imperial cult, which latter belonged to the closing days of Domitian, who made a jealous insistence of his claims to Divine honours. Further than this, it has been pointed out that the legend of *Nero redivivus* may be traced in the Apocalypse (xiii. 3, 12, 14; xvii. 8). It is well known that the Romans had a belief, in their hatred for Nero, that he could not die (Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 8), while, assuming that Nero is dead, Domitian is, according to some interpreters, *the beast*, the brutal and persecuting world power, who "was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (xvii. 8).

PERIOD OF NERO.

(2) On the other hand, there is strong evidence suggesting that the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. It cannot be without reason that the three greatest scholars of recent times, Lightfoot, Westcott, and Hort, to say nothing of Plumptree, Farrar, and Salmon, satisfied themselves that the book was written in the reign of Nero, or within a year or two of his death. Their conclusions were reached, partly by the relation which they believed the Revelation to occupy to the fall of Jerusalem, and partly by the contrast which it presents to the Fourth Gospel. Bishop Lightfoot says (*Supernatural Religion*, p. 132): "It (the Apocalypse) marks the close of what we may call the *Hebraic* period of St. John's life, viz., the period which . . . he had spent chiefly in the East and among Aramaic-speaking peoples." Westcott says (*The Gospel according to St. John*, Introduction,

pp. lxxxvi. f.): "Of the two books the Apocalypse is the earlier. It is less developed both in thought and style. . . . It is after the close of St. Paul's work . . . and, on the other hand, it is before the destruction of Jerusalem. The crisis of the Fall of Jerusalem explains the relation of the Apocalypse to the Gospel. In the Apocalypse the 'Coming' of Christ was expected, and painted in figures: in the Gospel the 'Coming' is interpreted. Under this aspect the Gospel is the spiritual interpretation of the Apocalypse."

Dr. Hort (*Apocalypse of St. John*, i.-iii., p. 26) says: "The whole language about Rome and the Empire, Babylon and the Beast, fits the last days of Nero, and the time immediately following, and does not fit the short, local reign of terror under Domitian."

APPEAL TO STYLE.

We may add that the strong argument for the early (Neronic) date is the difference in language between the Revelation and the Fourth Gospel. The language of the former is rugged, the Greek and Hebrew constructions being strongly intermingled. In literary style it is inferior to the smooth Greek of the Gospel and the Epistles, which were written by St. John when he had lived another twenty-five or more years in Ephesus, surrounded by the environment of Greek culture and civilisation.

We therefore, with little hesitation, cling to the old belief that St. John's banishment to Patmos took place either during, or just before, the closing years of Nero's reign, and but a short while before the Fall of Jerusalem. During this period he wrote the Revelation, or the basis of it, for there is a possibility that, in later years, he added to what he had previously written.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN (II.).

THE Apocalypse has been rightly termed "the crown of the New Testament Canon," and as such is worthy of the last place which it holds among the books of the Bible. Its nature differs, on the whole, from that of its sacred predecessors, although it contains some forty-five references to the Book of Daniel, and nearly as many to the Books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, with not a few reminiscences of the Prophets, the Psalter, and the Pentateuch. And yet it does not contain one single quotation from the Old Testament !

THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION.

The opening word of the Revelation is 'Αποκάλυψις, *Apocalypse*, and there is no better term or title descriptive of the Book than that. It means *Revelation*, and something more than Revelation, and is only used this once in the Book itself, although it occurs frequently in other parts of the New Testament—once by St. Luke, fourteen times by St. Paul, thrice by St. Peter, and nowhere by St. John except here. It is used in the Epistles eschatologically (i.) regarding the revelation of God (Rom. ii. 5), of Christ (1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Peter i. 7, 13; iv. 13), and of the saints (Rom. viii. 19); and also (ii.) of any revelation made to the Church (Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. xiv. 6, 26; 2 Cor. xii. 1, 7; Gal. i. 12, ii. 2; Eph. iii. 3), through the Spirit as a *spirit of revelation* (Eph. i. 17).

MYSTERY UNFOLDED.

Here the word means a Divine Revelation of which Jesus Christ was both the Recipient and the Giver. As in the case of St. Paul (Gal. i. 9), St. John received the Revelation direct from Jesus Christ, and not from man. "Revelation" is the unveiling of that which has been hidden; it is the actual converse of concealment; it is the process of drawing aside the veil that hides a mystery. A "mystery" in the New Testament sense (*μυστήριον*) means a "Divine secret," a Divine purpose in withholding a certain fact or knowledge until such time that the Divine will ordains it to be no longer "sealed" or hidden (cf. Matt. xi. 25, Rom. xvi. 25, Eph. iii. 3). Hence "revelation" differs somewhat from "prophecy." The former is connoted within the latter, and the greater (prophecy) includes the less. All revelation is prophecy, but all prophecy is not revelation. Hence we see that revelation is a special branch of prophecy, and, as such, requires a special and concentrated study, the more so in order to endeavour to understand the better the intricacies and the unfathomable depths of the visions of the Apocalypse.

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE.

But although there is only one definite Apocalypse in the New Testament, there were many apocalypses in Jewish and early Christian literature. Within the Canon of the Old Testament, apocalyptic passages occur in the Pentateuch (Gen. xv., xlix.; Num. xxiii., xxiv.), and historical Books (1 Kings xxii.). In the Prophets there are many apocalyptic passages, notably in Isaiah (xiii. ff, xxiv. ff, lxv. f), Ezekiel (almost wholly), Joel, and Zechariah. The Book of Daniel is the greatest apocalyptic literature of the Old Testament, especially the second half (vii.-xii.)—a fact which serves to explain its relation to and kinship with

the Apocalypse. Outside the Bible many Jewish apocalypses have come down to us, notably the Book of Enoch (Jude 14) and the Assumption of Moses (Jude 9). Also, as Swete suggests (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, page xxvi.), "the Sibylline Oracles are serviceable for illustrating the Revelation of St. John from an apocalyptic point of view."

A UNIQUE PROPHECY.

But the Revelation of St. John is not merely the only written Apocalypse of the Apostolic age; it is also the only prophetic book of that period. The Hebrew Prophets of old were concerned primarily with the moral and religious needs of the nation; their prophecy was, in the first place, a call to repentance and faith in God, and, in the second place, a call to national righteousness for the building up of the Hope of Israel, as fulfilled in the Abrahamic Covenants. The Apocalypse of St. John is in many ways a new departure from the prophecy of previous days, and from the apocalyptic writings of Jewish literature. Unlike the latter, the Revelation bears the author's name, whereby St. John claims for himself the position of a prophet who not only is conscious that he receives his vision from Jesus Christ or His angel—and therefore not second-hand—but who is convinced of his own authority, and, further, does not seek the pseudonym of a Biblical saint. The Christ of the Revelation is not the unrealised ideal of the uninspired apocalypses, but He is the already victorious, ascended, glorified Christ, the Holy One of Israel, the Lamb who is "Lord of lords, and King of kings."

THE SAME JESUS.

In this respect the Apocalypse reveals the heavenly life of our Lord, as the Gospels depict His life in Galilee and Jerusalem. We cannot do better than quote the

words of Swete, who says: " In the Gospels, He is seen teaching and working in His mortal flesh; in the Apocalypse, He belongs to another and a higher order. But the ascended life is a continuation of the life in the flesh; the Person is *the same yesterday and to-day*, in Palestine and in heaven. Thus the Apocalypse carries forward the revelation of the Gospels. It carries it, however, into a region where the methods of the biographer and historian avail nothing. We are in the hands of a Prophet who sees and hears things which elude the eyes and ears of other men; the simple narrative of the Evangelist has given place to symbolism which represents the struggle of the Apocalyptist to express ideas that lie, in great part, beyond the range of human thought. . . . No miracles meet us here, but we are in the presence of spiritual processes which are more wonderful than the healing of the sick, or the raising of the dead: a supervision of all the Churches which surpasses the powers of any earthly pastor; an ordering of nature and life which bears witness to the investment of the risen Lord with *all authority in heaven and on earth*; a perfect knowledge of men, and a pre-science which reads the issues of history. The revelation of the Lord's heavenly life becomes, as we proceed, a revelation of *the things which are and the things which shall come to pass hereafter*; we see the glorified life in its bearing upon the course of events, until the end has been attained and the whole creation has felt its renovating power " (*op. cit.*, Preface to the First Edition).

Thus, whatever difficulties may attend the desire of the earnest student to attain to some little understanding of the visions of the Apocalypse, at least one thing is clear, and that is, that the Book affords the sublimest spiritual food wherewith to satisfy the cravings of the Christian heart. It upholds the absolute supremacy of Christ; it sustains a belief in the ultimate victory of good over evil; it supports an inherited conviction in

the triumph of spirit over matter. It shows how the powers of this world, whether they be those of a crumpled Roman Empire or of a crumbling apostasy, are ultimately vanquished by "the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ." It shows that the real civilisation is that of the new Jerusalem which comes down from God out of heaven, which is none other than Israel, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, "the Bride the Lamb's wife."

EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.

The Apocalypse is the only Book in the New Testament which offers a special blessing to those who read and hear the words of its prophecy. It terminates, therefore, with an ecstatic appeal, echoed and re-echoed by the Spirit and the Bride, as by all trusting souls, to the Lord Jesus, now unveiled in all His glory, to come, and *to come quickly*.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN (III.)

THE Apocalypse is the visionary outcome of the first general conflict in which the Church of Christ was engaged with the heathen world. The rapid growth of the Christian Church in those earliest years soon proved itself to be antagonistic to the claims of heathendom, and it was not long before there became established a competitive rivalry—a rivalry which exists to this day—between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. There were many who thought that the kingdom of the world would prove stronger and mightier than the kingdom of God. What chances would the influence of a Peter or a John hold against the imperial might of a Nero or a Domitian? The Christian's society worshipped a God unseen, whereas the Roman Emperor claimed himself to be "Lord and God," even to the installation of his images in the temple sanctuaries.

THE QUESTION.

Death and exile were the reward for those Christians who refused to acknowledge the deity of the Emperor, or who owned only One Lord as King.

Nor would the Christians have failed to ask, as they agonised in prayer before the Throne of Grace, regarding the issue of the conflict, Will the Kingdom of God triumph in the end? Is Christ greater than Nero? Is the glory of the Triune majesty of God greater than the Imperial sway of Domitian and his successors? Will the beauty of spiritual truth finally overcome the beast

of materialism? These were the questions which the persecuted Christians asked in St. John's day, and they are the questions which, with proportionate adjustment to the times and the seasons, have been asked throughout the Christian era.

THE ANSWER.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ vouchsafed to St. John was the answer. It was Heaven's message of consolation to the saints in tribulation. Yet it is as great a comfort to the Church militant to-day as it has been to Christians of all times, from Apostolic and mediæval days to the period in which we now live.

It is quite beyond our possibility, within the compass of these short, if analytical, chapters, to attempt an explanation of the Apocalypse. Hardly has any book in the New Testament offered such a wide field for investigation and research. It is a veritable gold-mine, in which the earnest digger can always find more nuggets and unworked seams. If the Book gives endless joy and uplifting happiness to the spiritually-minded Christian, it gives equal bliss to the reverent scholar, who, matured in the knowledge of history, and not ignorant of the intricacies of contemporary apocalyptic literature, finds in the Revelation of St. John a book of consummate glory and lofty spirituality.

THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST.

Nor can we here enumerate all the interpretations—and systems of interpretations—which have suggested themselves to Christian students from the days of the early Fathers to the present time. To the spiritual eye, of no matter what period, the Apocalypse is the unveiling of Jesus Christ in the glory of eternal Truth. On this unchallenged point there is no need for controversy. To those of us who seek "Christ in all the

Scriptures " it contains the greatest of all visions of the Eternal Christ. Without the Apocalypse the Scriptures would be incomplete, and the knowledge of Christ previously given would be inadequate for the building-up of the Christian life. No matter, then, what interpretation in particular be studied, the principal thought is found in Christ, who is the Personal Centre of the Church on earth (Rev. i. 13), and the Personal Centre of the Church in heaven (v. 6).

EARTH AND HEAVEN.

Thus the Revelation deals with things on earth, and with things in heaven. It is *the Revelation of Jesus Christ . . . which is, and which was, and which is to come*. Its visions embrace an era of time co-extensive with the period from St. John's day to the yet perhaps distant future. No one human eye—regardless of the depth of its spiritual vision—can see the full truth of Revelation, although each and every prayerful mind can bestow its own individual thought on the great quest after eternal Truth.

THREE INTERPRETATIONS.

There are the " preterists " who see the Apocalypse and its interpretation only in the light of the events in Apostolic days, under the influence of the Roman Empire. There are the " futurists " who see in the Revelation a series of visions of " the Church in Heaven," and who maintain that the fulfilments will take place in times yet to come. And there are those who belong to the school of the "continuous-historical" interpretation (to which the present writer is consciously attached), who not only cling to the essential unity of the Book and its prophetic inspiration, but also see, from Genesis to Revelation, a gradual and unbroken sequence of prophecy and fulfilment, both constant

and consistent. This school of interpretation recognises that prophecy has a vision for every generation, and that it holds out a bright and shining light to illumine the path of the faithful, and to guide the destinies of Israel, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, until she be wedded and crowned in glory.

THE TIMELESS CROSS.

The Apocalypse was primarily written and addressed to the Seven Churches in Asia, but the messages and visions contained therein are intended to serve the needs of the Church of Christ through all time. They are given to uphold the victory of the Cross over the evil power of the world, to encourage a deeper loyalty and fidelity to Christ as King, and to inspire Christian hope.

ISRAEL REDEEMED.

The doctrine of the Revelation, with its symbolism, is that of the absolute glory and kingship of the Risen Christ, and this fact is assisted by the angelology and the eschatology of the Book, both of which latter subjects are more than fruitful when studied. They are closely allied with the triumphant and unified vision of redeemed Israel, seen in the "four and twenty elders"—twelve from the Old Covenant, and twelve from the New. Israel thus unites with "angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven," in worshipping the "Lamb as it had been slain," the perpetual centre of eternal gravity.

ANALYSIS.

The Apocalypse, with its seven groups of visions, may be divided into two nearly equal parts (i. 9—xi. 14, and xii. 1—xxii. 5). In the first part Christ is seen as the Head of the Church, and the Controller of the destinies of the world. In the second part, the Church is

no longer seen under seven heads, but as a Woman, the Mother of Christ and of Israel. She appears in conflict with the spiritual forces of evil, such as the great red Dragon, the Beast from the sea, and the Beast from the land, symbols of Satan and his subordinates. But St. John also sees judgments taking place on earth, as symbolised by the seven vials full of the last plagues, followed by the vision of the fall of the prophetic Babylon, the world-empire of pagan and papal Rome, the symbol of apostasy and unrighteousness.

THE FINAL GLORY.

Finally, the Apocalypse pictures the overthrow of Satan, and the manifestation of Israel as the Bride of Christ, indwelling the New Jerusalem, the City of God, the antithesis of Babylon. In this brilliant and glorious vision Christ is all in all, for "the Lamb is the Light thereof."

Thus closes with an appeal to personal holiness, to which is added the anticipated joy of the Lord's return, *the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, a Book which lifts the Christian believer, and the guileless Israelite, to the highest realms of Faith, Hope, and Love, and which closes the Canon of the New Testament, and crowns "the sure word of prophecy" with blessing and glory. BLESSED IS HE THAT READETH, AND THEY THAT HEAR THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

IT is a noteworthy fact that the term "gospel" is never applied to the Church in the New Testament, as explained above (pp. 41, 42). It may therefore be fitting to draw attention to the meaning of the word as used in the Greek Testament, and to its remarkable kinship with the word "English," which comes from the same root.

The growing consciousness of our National Calling has long since been burning itself into the soul of our nation, and we are assuredly beginning to recognise that God has a work for the British and American peoples to do in the world, which He has assigned to no other race. "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise" (Isa. xliii. 21). Our National Birthright (see my *Old Testament Studies*, Chap. LI.) has made us God's "witnesses." In fact, some of the names by which redeemed Israel are known are as follows: "the Lord's portion" (Deut. xxxii. 9), His "purchased" (Exod. xv. 16), "inheritance" (1 Sam. x. 1), "His people" (Deut. xxxii. 9), "the ransomed of the Lord" (Isa. xxxv. 10), "the redeemed of the Lord" (Isa. li. 11), "the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 18, 22, 27), "the children of God" (John xi. 52), "My called" (Isa. xlviii. 12), "My servant" (Isa. xlii. 1), "Mine elect" (Isa. xlii. 1), "My messenger" (Isa. xlii. 19), "My witnesses" (Isa. xliii. 10, 12, xliv. 8; Luke xxiv. 48; Acts i. 8), "My sheep" (John x. 27, cf. Matt. x. 6, xv. 24), "the elect" (Matt. xxiv. 22), "My church" (Matt. xv. 18), "the remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. xi. 5), "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. xxi. 9).

THE MESSENGER NATION.

We have, then, the spiritual privilege of being God's messenger nation, and therefore "witnesses" of "the Gospel of the Kingdom." As such we are guardians of life and liberty throughout the world, so that the day will dawn when there will be no speech nor language where the voice of Britain's birthright message shall not be heard. Its line will go out into all the earth, and its words to the end of the world. In this connection there is a great truth underlying the famous play upon words which the Venerable Bede records of the incident concerning the fair-haired youths whom Gregory the Great saw in the market-place at Rome. In fact, we cannot do better than quote the actual words of Bede, who says (*Ecclesiastical History*, Lib. 2, Chap. I.):— "Nor is the account of St. Gregory, which has been handed down to us by the tradition of our ancestors, to be passed by in silence, in relation to his motives for taking such interest in the salvation of our nation. It is reported that some merchants, having just arrived at Rome on a certain day, exposed many things for sale in the market-place, and abundance of people resorted thither to buy. Gregory himself went with the rest, and, among other things, some boys were set to sale, their bodies white, their countenances beautiful, and their hair very fine. Having viewed them, he asked, as is said, from what country or nation they were brought, and was told, from the island of Britain, whose inhabitants were of such personal appearance. He again inquired whether those islanders were Christians or still involved in the errors of paganism, and was informed that they were pagans. Then, fetching a deep sigh from the bottom of his heart, 'Alas! what pity,' said he, 'that the author of darkness is possessed of men of such fair countenances; and that being remarkable for such graceful aspects, their minds should be

void of inward grace.' He therefore again asked what was the name of that nation, and was answered that they were called Angles. 'Right,' said he, 'for they have an angelic face, and it becomes such to be co-heirs with the angels in heaven. What is the name,' proceeded he, 'of the province from which they are brought?' It was replied that the natives of that province were called Deiri. 'Truly are they *De ira*,' said he, 'withdrawn from wrath, and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that province called?' They told him his name was Aella; and he, alluding to the name, said 'Hallelujah, the praise of God the Creator must be sung in those parts!''

THE MISSION OF ST. AUGUSTINE, A.D. 597.

"Then," continues Bede, "repairing to the Bishop of the Roman Apostolical See (for he was not himself then made Pope), he entreated him to send some ministers of the Word into Britain to the nation of the English, by whom it might be converted to Christ; declaring himself ready to undertake that work, by the assistance of God, if the Apostolic Pope should think fit to have it so done. Which, not being then able to perform, because, though the Pope was willing to grant his request, yet the citizens of Rome could not be brought to consent that so noble, so renowned, and so learned a man should depart the city; as soon as he was himself made Pope, he perfected the long-desired work, sending other preachers, but himself by his prayers and exhortations assisting the preaching, that it might be successful. This account, as we have received it from the ancients, we have thought fit to insert in our Ecclesiastical History."

ANGLI AND ANGELI.

Gregory thus regarded the British youths both as *Angeli* and *Angli*. But there is no such word as

Angelus in the Latin classics. When so used by the Romans, it was borrowed direct from the Greek ἄγγελος, (*aggelos*, pronounced *angelos*). The Greek word really means "messenger." As such it is used by Homer, Herodotus, and the Greek classics generally. But when used in the Septuagint (LXX.), the New Testament, and in ecclesiastical writings, it is descriptive of the messenger of Jehovah, and so means "an angel." Now, when the messenger was the bearer of good tidings, his message was called τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, which is the actual word used both in the classics and in the New Testament, where, in the former, it means "the reward of good tidings," "good tidings," "good news," and in the latter "the gospel."

We see, therefore, that the root word which is used for "messenger," "angel," "good tidings," and "gospel," has its close affinity with the word "Angle" or "Anglo," from which the word "English" is derived. The English (using the word in its broadest sense to mean Anglo-Saxons) are, in the literal sense of the term, "God's angels or messengers," and to us is committed, among our birthright privileges, "the message (gospel, or good tidings) of the Kingdom." Again, it may be noticed that the English word "evangelise" contains the same root word, and means "to deliver a good message," and consequently "to preach," and is used some fifty-five times in the New Testament, a good example of which is found in the words of our Lord: "I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God" (Luke iv. 43, R.V.).

THE WIDE WORLD FOR CHRIST.

Without racial pride it must be admitted, therefore, in all humility, that we are the great race which God has raised up in fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, to preach the good tidings of the Kingdom, as our very

name signifies; and it may almost be said that the "evangelisation" of the world can only come about as a result of the "ev-Anglo-isation" of the world, that is, by the world-wide witness of the Anglo-Saxon race to the Birthright message of its glorious inheritance.

This is the teaching of the Old Testament combined with that of the New Testament. It is the message of the Church of God; it is the fulfilment of the hope of Israel, and it is the glory of the Ascended Christ.

VAE ENIM MIHI EST, SI NON EVANGELIZAVERO. (*Epistola Prima Beati Pauli Apostoli Ad Corinthios*, ix. 16).

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